His Highness

THE AGA KHAN

Imam of the Ismailis

By the same author

TRAVEL AND POLITICS

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Pacific Scene

Mediterranean Scene

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(in collaboration with Roland Wild)

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Mirrors of Moscow

Storm Over India

Paris Calling

Our Oldest Ally

Round the World for News

Scoops

HISTORY

Three Years of Hell

BIOGRAPHY

The Strange Life of Willie Clarkson

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I Hate Tomorrow

FICTION

Such is Life

Montmartre Rose

His Highness

THE AGA KHAN

Imam of the Ismailis

by

HARRY J. GREENWALL

With a Foreword on Racing by
H.H. THE AGA KHAN

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CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES

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HOW I BEGAN RACING

From childhood, almost infancy, I was in a family where racing was the main distraction as my father, grandfathers, uncles and cousins all had racing horses in India. I remember as a child our whole family was almost in mourning and despair when Fred Archer's tragic death took place. Names such as Ormonde, Saint Simon, Common were household words in our family gatherings.

When I came to Europe I was a regular attendant at race courses like Ascot and Epsom in England, while in France I usually spent every Sunday afternoon going to race meetings around Paris or when in the South of France at Nice. But with a busy and complicated life, I never seriously thought of having horses of my own.

One night in the Spring of 1921, *I was dining at a friend's house in London and my neighbour was a Mrs. Asquith, one of Lord Oxford's daughters-in-law, who was the sister of Mrs. George Lambton. We talked racing all through dinner and even after when we sat out I joined her and continued our horse talk. She suggested to me to start a racing stable and to get in touch with Mr. George Lambton who could help me either in training or in management. It was like a trigger being drawn on a cannon: what was pent up from childhood and would never have come out, suddenly became an irresistible mental storm.*

The next day I wrote to Mr. Lambton, who was unknown to me personally, to come and see me. He introduced me to Mr. Dawson, the trainer, and he himself started buying mares for me for my future stud. On my visit to Paris, I engaged the then most famous trainer, Mr. Duke, the American, and bought a lot of horses at Deauville with his help and assistance. The very next year I was in the four front owners of two-year-olds: in 1923 *I was one of the leading owners and then in* 1924 *I was the leading owner, both in France and in England—a thing which has never been done since either by myself or by anybody else and which, I believe, has never happened before. Thus success suddenly came to a beginner. The result of one chance dinner party affinity led to*

than most people are aware, while the Eastern side of his life is certainly far more important than almost anybody outside the East knows.

The Aga Khan's claim to ancient lineage is based on the fact that Mohammed had one surviving daughter, named Fatima, who married her father's cousin, Ali, and thus began a somewhat complicated relationship. Her father was her uncle by marriage.

Mohammed, founder of the Moslem Faith, claimed to be Allah's Prophet. When Mohammed died he had made no provision regarding his eventual successor. In principle, a Moslem Sultan, King or High Priest, passes on the succession to his oldest son, but in usual practice he chooses his successor from among his sons or nephews. This point may well be of paramount importance when in the fullness of time the question of the succession by the fourth Aga Khan—and of the fabulous fortune—comes forward.

Even before Mohammed was buried the squabble for the succession to the Caliphate was raging. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Fatima's husband, claimed it. But subsequent developments tend to show that Ali was of a somewhat retiring nature and would not have urged the claim had it not been for the promptings of the more domineering Fatima. Those who supported Ali recalled that Mohammed had always shown his preference for him and had referred to him publicly as 'Aaron' and compared him to the Moon and himself to the Sun. Nevertheless, Ali's claim was passed over; the Caliphate was awarded to one, Abu Bakr, to whom Ali gave allegiance.

Fatima, however, would not accept her husband's peaceful acknowledgment of his successful rival. She began by staking a claim to some Crown Lands, a claim the Caliph Abu rejected. Fatima then began to rally supporters and formed a rival camp large enough to give battle to the Caliph at Wadi-us-Sabba. The

result was inconclusive, and another rival of Ali's, Omar, became Caliph.

Fatima went to work again, rallying supporters, with such success that on the death of Omar it seemed there would be a chance for her husband, Ali.

Omar had left a political testament nominating a Council to select a Caliph. The Council imposed conditions that Ali—or Fatima—would not accept. So the Caliphate went to one, Usman. The point at issue seemed again to be the question of succession. Ali and his supporters wanted the Caliphate of Islam to be hereditary, whereas Usman desired the Caliphate to be an elective office. Ali and Fatima had two sons, so it is not difficult to understand why they wished the Caliphate to be hereditary. In those days, the middle of the seventh century A.D., the power of the Caliphate being both temporal and spiritual, the income of the Caliph was enormous and his power great, his rule extending over hundreds of thousands of square miles of the Middle East.

Reports from the provinces now spoke of terrible atrocities. Unrest became general, until A.D. 655, when Usman died. Then at long last Ali became Caliph, and Fatima's ambitions were realised. But more trouble was at hand.

Ma'awiah, Governor of Syria, decided to contest Ali's claim to the Caliphate. Among Ali's followers Ma'awiah was held in contempt because it was alleged he had caused the corpse of Amir Hamz, one of Mohammed's uncles, to be disinterred and mutilated. There was another civil war.

The principal battle was at Siffin, in A.D. 657. Both sides claimed the victory, but Ma'awiah won a strategic victory because he withdrew under the cover of darkness and took up a stronger position. Ali's losses were heavy. To avoid further bloodshed, Ali offered to meet Ma'awiah in single combat to decide the issue. Finally, however, it was agreed to settle the quarrel by arbitration.

Nothing seems to have been settled, and three years later Ali was murdered by a woman fanatic as he was leaving the Mosque at Cufa, near the ruins of Babylon.

Of Ali's two sons, Hasan and Husain, Hasan, the elder, was known as a hermit saint who listened to his mother's entreaties; he agreed to become the Imam of the Shiahs, as the followers of Ali were known. He did not care much for the post and after a while he agreed to part with it to Ma'awiah, in return for an annuity. Hasan then went to live in Medina.

A short time later Ma'awiah came to the conclusion that if he had Hasan murdered it would save him a great deal of money. And so it came to pass. Ma'awiah plotted with one of Hasan's wives to poison her husband.

In the contract Hasan had made with Ma'awiah there was a clause to the effect that when Ma'awiah died, the Caliphate should pass to Husain, Hasan's younger brother, but now Ma'awiah regretted this agreement. When he died, in A.D. 680, it was found that he had nominated his son Yezd as his successor.

Husain claimed the Caliphate, and the Moslems of Iraq promised their support if Husain would raise an army and defeat Yezd. Husain agreed. With his wife, sister and two of his sons he set out to raise an army. He had recruited fewer than a hundred men when he found himself surrounded by Yezd's forces on the banks of the Euphrates, at Kerbela, now a holy shrine.

Yezd's men massacred Husain, his family and his followers, with the exception of one of Husain's sons, Zain-ul-Abidin, whose mother was a Persian Princess.

The massacre at Kerbela put an end to the Shiahs' hopes of ever being a political force but by no means curtailed their power and influence as a religious sect. Zain-ul-Abidin became the fourth Shiah Imam. He was succeeded by his son and grandson, Jaffer Sedik, known as 'Jaffer the Just'. Then came more changes.

Jaffer Sedik's eldest son was named Ismail; he died during his father's lifetime, but the Ismailis, a branch of the Shiahs, acknowledged him to be their seventh Imam, although he died before his father. The rest of the Shiahs claim that Jaffer's second son, Musa, was the seventh Imam. The present Aga Khan is a direct descendant of Ismail through an unbroken line, but what is more important perhaps to him is that the breach between the followers of Ismail and his descendants and the followers of Musa and his descendants practically healed, so that together they are in opposition to the other main Moslem sect, the Sunnis.

After many years of strife, the forebears of the present Aga Khan settled in Persia, a country in which His Highness's nearer ancestors had deep roots. Shah Khalilulla, for example, great-grandfather of the subject of this biography, became an outstanding figure in Persia; he was Governor of the Kerman Province as well as being Imam of the Ismailis, but one day he was found dead with a knife in his back, a not uncommon happening in this unhappy Valley. He was succeeded by his son, Mohammed Husain.

Mohammed Husain became even more powerful than his father. He was a great favourite at Court; the Shah of Persia not only presented him with vast Crown Lands, but allowed him to marry his daughter. He eventually became Aga Khan the First, grandfather of the present Aga Khan.

The Shah of Persia at that time had exercised the Moslem right to pass over the claim of his first born, Mohammed Ali, and had nominated a younger son, Abas, as Shah, but Abas died during his father's lifetime; so the Shah nominated Abas's son, Mohammed Mirza. When the Shah died there was a war of succession, because the late Shah's displaced son, Zil-es-Sultan, claimed the throne from his nephew, Mohammed Mirza, to whose support the first Aga Khan, known as Aga Khan of Mehelati, rallied. When the Pretender Zil-es-Sultan was ultimately defeated, the new Shah

loaded the first Aga Khan with honours and made him Commander-in-Chief of the Persian Army.

Soon afterwards he was sent to quell a revolt in Kerman Province where another brother of the Shah was leading the rebellion. The Aga Khan took the Prince prisoner and brought him in chains to the Court of his brother, the Shah. All would have been well if Aga Khan I had not then entered into high finance.

The State Exchequer was in a parlous condition, so the Aga Khan had agreed to pay half the cost of the campaign out of his own pocket and to recoup himself from the Kerman revenues when order was restored.

In 1838, when the first Aga Khan was still waiting to obtain his money, a young *protégé* of the Persian Premier fell in love with his daughter and wanted to marry her. The young officer was a man of lowly antecedents and the Aga Khan did not think him a worthy suitor for the hand of his daughter, a granddaughter of the Shah of Persia; so his suit was rejected. The suitor then went to his patron the Premier, with a story purporting to show that the Aga Khan was extracting heavy revenues from the Shah's unfortunate subjects in the Province of Kerman. The Shah claimed the return of all the monies the Aga Khan had collected. The Aga Khan refused to pay, so yet another civil war began, the Aga Khan versus the rest of Persia.

The Aga Khan was losing his war when the Premier intervened with an offer to the Aga Khan that he should lay down his arms and retire to his estates at Mehelat and there live at peace. The Aga Khan accepted the offer, but no sooner had he sheathed his sword than he was made prisoner and taken to Teheran. The Shah then released him. Instead of going to Mehelat, the Aga Khan went back to Kerman, where he was in grave danger. He was excommunicated, boycotted. People were not allowed to sell him food or even provide him with water. But the

indefatigable old warrior fought his way out of Kerman, crossed over into Afghanistan and reached Cabul where he was well received by the British garrison.

The Aga Khan made his way to Sind, in India, where he had many followers who regarded him as their Imam. They gave him much money, so much that he had serious thoughts of using it to raise an army with which to return to Persia and fight it out with the Shah, but Sir Charles Napier persuaded him to stay with him. Sir Charles, writing to his son under date August 4th, 1844, said: 'I will get you a Persian cat . . . the old Persian Prince is my great crony here. He is not living under my care but is paid by me, two thousand pounds a year. He is a god; his income is immense. He could kill me if he pleased, he has only to say the word and one of his people can do the job in a twinkling and go straight to Heaven for the same, but he won't do that. . . .'

In estimating the position in the Eastern and Western world of the third, the present, Aga Khan, one must regard his grandfather, the first Aga Khan, as the bridge between that quasi-Biblical world, and the semi-legendary life of the third Aga Khan, which spans the gulf between the East and the West and defies the Kipling assertion that the twain shall never meet. If one studies closely the life of the first Aga Khan one can better understand the existence of his grandson. The old man's attempts to regain lost power, futile certainly, were nevertheless gallant, but it was he who discovered that one could serve both Allah and Mammon.

Leaving his homeland, Persia, as an exile, Aga Khan I decided to go to Calcutta, hoping that sooner or later he would receive a free pardon and would be able to return to his country. When he found he would never be able to return to Persia, he decided to settle in Bombay Province. He died in April, 1881, at the age of ninety.

During the last fifteen years or so of his life, Aga Khan I

was vigorously attacked by the Khoja Reform Party, whose avowed object was to make the Ismaili Moslems, of whom the Khojas formed a part, more Liberal. In 1864 Aga Khan I was forced to take legal action and in a famous law suit known as 'The Khoja Case' he established his descent, but many of the attacks made in 'Open Letters' (copies of which are to be found in the British Museum) were entirely personal and directed against the Aga Khan's alleged behaviour, it being claimed that although seventy years of age he insisted on maintaining his *droits de seigneur*.

Aga Khan's oldest son, Aga Ali Shah, succeeded him as Aga Khan II. He married and had two sons, Aga Shah and Aga Noor Shah, by his first wife, who died. Aga Khan married again and this wife died, too, childless. He married a third time, a daughter of a pious man, Nizam-ud-Daulah, a Persian of a well-born family. This lady, who became known as Lady Ali Shah, gave birth to a son at Honeymoon Lodge, Karachi, November 2nd, 1877, and he is the present Aga Khan.

His future might well have been quite obscure had not his older step-brother, Aga Shah, died of a chest complaint at the early age of thirty-three. A little while later his surviving step-brother, Aga Noor Shah, fell from his horse while riding at Poona and was fatally injured. He was only thirty years of age.

Aga Khan II made his younger brother Jenzi Shah guardian of his baby son. Then he died in 1886 after having been the Aga Khan for five years only. And so there came now to rule as a religious chief over millions of Moslems a small boy of eight, known to all the world to-day simply as 'The Aga Khan'.

CHAPTER II

THE LADY ALI SHAH

'WHY ARE YOU looking so sad? Isn't your Imam among you, doing your work?'

The speaker was the Aga Khan, then between eight and nine years old. He was addressing a group of bearded and patriachal gentlemen, his disciples, most of them certainly six and seven times his age. A photograph of him made at this period shows a tiny Aga Khan in full Ismaili regalia, sitting on a cushion and surrounded by these disciples.

To be the mother of a god must be a very complicated matter in a modern world, and even in 1886 the problem must have presented its difficulties, but the Aga Khan's mother certainly overcame them with success. As a child, the Aga Khan was not spoilt; on the contrary, he was ruled and disciplined, a method he most certainly did not adopt later towards the older of his own two surviving sons. When the Aga Khan was eight his widowed mother was approximately thirty-five. She had herself been brought up in purdah and in an atmosphere of piety and religion. On the death of the second of her step-sons it was of course obvious to Lady Ali Shah that her own son's education would have to be centred on his task as a leader of the Ismaili Moslems. To this task she attached herself with delight, but the axiom of the rod and the child was never entirely out of sight. In after years, when he was married to his third wife, the Aga Khan confessed to his beautiful English secretary, Miss Freda Blain, 'My mother is the only woman of whom I have ever been afraid.' This was said in 1932.

If it had not been for the untimely death of his two step-brothers who stood between him and the succession to the Imamate, it is possible that the Aga Khan would have been

educated at Mayo College, the school of the sons of Indian Princes, but his mother decided that private education at home would be the better plan. Certain of his admirers for some obscure reason claim that he was educated at Eton and Cambridge, but except possibly as a sightseer, His Highness has never been nearer those centres of education than Windsor Races and Newmarket Heath, but most emphatically his cultural knowledge has not suffered in the least.

Concurrent with the intensive religious education given him by Moslem priests, the Aga Khan was taught by two English tutors. He confesses now that his reading made heavy going; he was surrounded with volumes of Sir Walter Scott, reinforced by Macaulay and others of the English classics. Languages came to him easily enough. Persian was the household language, but to this was added Hindustani and Urdu, before English, French and, later, German were added to the Oriental languages. By the time he was fourteen, the Aga Khan had displayed his love for reading biographies, a liking he has never lost. He rarely reads a modern novel, but he always makes for the nearest English language bookshop wherever he may be, and buys biographies as fast as they come on sale. Apart from his book learning, the boy Aga Khan displayed much interest in practical mechanics, quite a strange bent for a young Oriental of those days.

Sport was encouraged. The Aga Khan played tennis and hockey, but for cricket he has always displayed a certain amount of good-natured contempt. Golf came much later. He began to play in India, but not so intensively as he did in middle age in Europe, where for a time he travelled with his own golf professional and once practically owned a golf course of his own on the French Riviera.

In early life the Aga Khan developed a love of animals, and almost as soon as he could toddle he was to be seen leading one of the tame stags in the grounds of his palace by a piece of string

tied round its neck. He has always had a very real love of horses, an affection possibly fostered by his grandfather. Horse riding was his favourite pastime. 'Ah,' he says very often, even now, 'is there anything so poetic and beautiful as a man riding a beautiful horse, riding it to perfection, the man and the horse like a centaur, completely one?' The Aga Khan, one can believe, all his life has retained a very real sense of the poetry of motion.

Lady Ali Shah was by no means a young woman when she gave evidence as a co-defendant with her son in the famous law case that is recorded a little later, yet Mr. Justice Russell complimented her in Court on her 'wonderful memory'. When the late Mr. Edwin Montague visited her in Bombay he wrote about her in his famous Diary. He said of her that she was so sweet and gentle, sitting next to the wife of the Governor of Bombay, holding her hand and kissing her every few minutes.

Lady Ali Shah has also been pictured as a woman of great determination, a born organiser. Her War work in 1914–18 showed up her abilities in that direction, but little has been told of her financial ability which amounted to genius, genius certainly inherited by her son.

The British Government in India could not have been too sure of the financial standing of the baby Aga Khan, because on his father's death it gave him a pension of 1,000 Rupees a month for life. But the Government need not have worried. It could have read Sir Charles Napier's published papers, wherein, as has been told, he wrote that he was paying this Aga Khan's grandfather £2,000 a year and added: 'He is immensely rich.'

Rich he was, and his riches were handed down to the infant Aga Khan and invested and re-invested for him by his mother. She speculated with the touch of Midas, and the buying and selling of properties were her principal sources of success. She never made an error of judgment. She had complete control of her son's income and capital from the time he was eight years old,

and when she handed the estate over to him, when he was sixteen years of age, his capital had been increased four times. But this was but one of the material benefits the Lady Ali Shah conveyed to her beloved son.

She herself saw that her son's interests lay entirely within the orbit of the British Empire, with certain exceptions, as in the case of East Africa, where a number of Ismaili Moslems lived in the German Colonies there. She saw quite clearly that her son's interests were bound up with the wealth and prosperity of the British Empire as a whole. So long as the sun never set on that Empire, all would be well with the spiritual welfare of her son's followers. But there was another point, not unconnected with this admirable outlook: there must be co-ordination between the widely scattered Ismaili Moslems, just as there was between the Roman Catholics wherever they were, but whereas the Pope had no opposition among the faithful, there was cleavage between the Moslems. The Caliph of the Moslems lived in Constantinople. The Caliph was the Sultan of Turkey, at that time Abdul Hamid —'Abdul the Damned'. His followers, the Sunnis, who formed the majority of the Moslems, looked to Constantinople just as Roman Catholics all over the world look to Rome, but the Ismailis had no spiritual home.

With only a small boy as their spiritual ruler there might well have been a decline in the power of the Imamate had not this wonderful woman, Lady Ali Shah, set to work organising local councils, which collected fees and passed on information as to the well-being or otherwise of the local Ismaili. To make them feel that their welfare was precious was the aim of Lady Ali Shah, who looked forward to the day when her son would be old enough to travel and personally visit his scattered followers.

It was also all to the advantage of the Government of British India that there should be a person whose influence among the Moslems of India should coincide with British interests. Thus the

interests of Lady Ali Shah, on behalf of her son, and the interests of the British Raj marched side by side. One can take the matter of the North-West Frontier Province as a notable example. The British Raj was always having trouble with the Afghans and tribes on the frontier between India and Afghanistan. Here the Aga Khan had many followers. It was not possible for the boy Prince or his mother to keep these tribes in complete submission, but such influence as they were able to bring to bear certainly achieved very considerable good.

It was alleged by the Khoja Reform Society that Lady Ali Shah was the founder of a Secret Society called Moto Punth. Moto Punth was a sect within a sect, within the Ismaili Moslems. The two words mean 'Great Religion'. There are, or were, about 500 male and female members of this Secret Society, all '*fidavis*' (fanatics). The Reform Society did not seem to object so much to the Society itself or to the suggestion that it had been founded by the Aga Khan's mother. Its grievance towards Moto Punth was connected with its annual subscription fee, 250 rupees (£15), which the Khoja Reformers said was too high.

In his early youth the Aga Khan learned from his mother to understand the advantages of education, at a time when education in India was something only for the rich. All his grown-up life he has preached Education and maybe the hundreds of thousands of pounds of his followers' money that the Aga Khan has spent on their Education brought its own reward, but there are many who doubt this. When one has had a Calcutta bootblack hand one his calling card with the information 'failed B.A.' printed after his name as a hall mark of social distinction, one begins to wonder whether education in India was the signal success the Aga Khan and others claim it was. But concurrent with the secular education there was religious instruction of a high degree.

After he was installed Hazur Imam of the Ismailis, it became the Aga Khan's duty to work for the spiritual welfare of his

people, and yet at the same time he was being tutored in the histories of Britain, Persia and India, reading Hunter's *Rulers of India*, the *Lives of Eminent Men* and *The Queen's Prime Ministers*, likewise *History of Our Own Times*. Then came Shakespeare and Milton; later chemistry and mathematics. A fortnight a year was set apart for his followers to gather round him and pay homage. On each such occasion, the Aga Khan had to read a paper on Moslem philosophy, and always near at hand, ready to give advice and encouragement, was the Lady Ali Shah. When he was but ten years old he was frequently called upon to arbitrate on religious and sometimes non-religious disputes that arose within his community. The question of capability could never have arisen, because the word of the young god was, as it still is, law among his followers. Whether the Imam was ten or eighty was of no concern whatsoever to the faithful. As far as is known, the Aga Khan has never personally made claim to godlike qualities, such as the ability to effect cures by the laying on of his hands, but neither has he, so far as is known, ever done anything or said anything to disabuse the belief that he is a god. Alcohol, for example, is forbidden to Moslems, but the Aga Khan takes wine when he wills, although he preaches abstinence and counsels the drinking of fruit juices. He can take wine without offending any religious scruples because, as he says himself, 'I am so holy that when I drink wine, it turns to water.'

In 1951 an Englishman travelling in a remote part of India came to a mosque and obtained permission to enter it. To his surprise he found a photograph of the Aga Khan among the holy relics. The Englishman explained to the priest that the only occasion he had seen the Aga Khan was on the English and French racecourses.

'And why should not a god go racing?' enquired the priest disdainfully.

It is probable that the Aga Khan's mother, like mothers the

world over, was always right, and as her influence persisted long after her son reached manhood (she died at the age of ninety when her son was sixty-one) it must be assumed that she tacitly at least approved such things.

The collection of monies from his followers for the development of the welfare State, in which the Lady Ali Shah and her son wished they should live, also formed an important part of this *éducation de prince*. His mother began it and the Aga Khan has carried on the plan and embellished and improved on it all his life. The building of the Moslem University was perhaps his very first big scheme. It took many years to bring this plan to fulfilment, but the Aga Khan raised more than 30 lakhs of rupees (£200,000) to build what became the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligath.

If, as a boy, the Aga Khan under his mother's tuition learned the lesson of his historic heritage from an ancestry that came from Caliphs who ruled Egypt at the time of the Crusades and in more modern times ruled Persia, it is quite evident that he also learned that such ancient lineage as his could only be useful if it was canalised into the seemingly steady stream of British rule throughout the world. Yet it seems that at quite a young age the Aga Khan thought matters out for himself and decided, as he said to me many, many years later: 'India demands the right to make her own mistakes.' Let there be no misunderstanding of his meaning. He wanted independence for India, but most sincerely he wanted India to remain within the framework of the British Empire. And again most undoubtedly, he learned that belief from his mother, whose grasp of world affairs was extraordinary for a woman born in the East, who had never travelled, and who could neither read nor speak English.

When the Aga Khan was sixteen and received his greatly enhanced inheritance, he began almost immediately to take an intense interest in politics as well as Moslem affairs. His mother, as we have seen, was brought up in purdah. Her son began a

campaign to abolish purdah. From there he went on to preach—in later life—the extension of the franchise to Indian women. He attacked child marriage, but between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, precocious as it may sound, the Aga Khan took over Moslem leadership in India.

Early in 1896, when he was not yet nineteen, the Aga Khan went to Delhi to call on the Viceroy, Lord Minto. He was received at the Viceregal Lodge as Head of the Moslem Deputation, not the head of the Ismailis but of the whole of the millions and millions of Moslems everywhere. It was a triumph for himself but it was an even greater triumph for his mother, who had educated and instilled into him the legendary wisdom of the East and, in the case of this couple, mother and son, the Oriental wisdom included a first-rate knowledge of finance.

The visit to Delhi had a notable sequel. First, from this Moslem Deputation the formidable Moslem League was formed, a League in which the Aga Khan has played such a notable part.

Secondly, the Aga Khan, having covered the first lap of his life's journey, now turned his eyes to the wider world. His mother and his tutors had talked to him of the Western World.

Now he wanted to see it for himself.

CHAPTER III

WESTWARD APPROACH

THE AGA KHAN was nineteen when he made his first contact with the Western world. Although as a personality he was unknown to the British, or any other European people, the India Office in London was familiar with the potential power of this rather good-looking young man who showed a tendency to corpulence. The Viceroy, Lord Minto, had reported fully on the Aga Khan, whose millions of religious followers were scattered not only all over India, but also over many other parts of Queen Victoria's Empire. The Viceroy perhaps stressed how important it was that the Aga Khan, regarded as a young god by millions of his followers, should be especially honoured. The British Raj was apparently firmly ensconced in India, where there were millions of Moslems who gave allegiance to the Aga Khan, and not to the Caliph at Constantinople. They also had to be honoured through honour paid to their Imam. So the Great White Queen bade the Aga Khan to come to her castle at Windsor, to dine and spend the night beneath her roof.

Never before had he left India. His mother, the Lady Ali Shah, ruled him with a rule of iron. Her two step-sons were dead; Aga Khan was her only child, her cherished and adored one, but despite the education she had given him, he, in her eyes, could seldom do right. The son spoke fluent English now; his mother spoke only Persian and Urdu. Yet her keen intuition gave her an uncanny understanding of the affairs of England. She often said that she regarded Queen Victoria almost as a member of her own family, so the Royal invitation came to her perhaps less as a Command than as a mark of favour the Great White Queen wished to confer on a young relative from India. But she realised, as did her son, that the invitation was indeed a very special one,

because at her great age few were the invitations to 'dine and sleep' that Her Majesty sent forth.

There was, however, a reason, perhaps at that time not so well known to the India Office, but known only too well to Lady Ali Shah and her son, why it was important that the Aga Khan should find something striking with which to impress a minority of his followers, among whom there was unrest. Just as Moses had to climb Mount Sinai to seek guidance and return with a symbol of communicated power in order to impress the unruly Children of Israel, so did the Aga Khan have to find a symbol for his unruly followers.

There were recurrent attacks from the Khoja Reform Party. Although its influence was relatively small, there was always a certain latent danger, certainly more so between 1864 and 1927 than at the present day. There was need to build up the personality of the Aga Khan, to put him on a platform in the heart of the Empire, from whence his reflected glory might shine back on India, where practically all of the 'Reform Party' were located. Another reason was that in 1896, the year that the Aga Khan set out for his first visit to the West, there had been a most unfortunate double murder in his family, an occurrence of which the 'Reform Party' made the fullest use.

The uncle of the Aga Khan, Janzi Shah, with his son, went on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Jeddah. While there, they were murdered. The assassins were arrested, and it was stated that they were '*fidavis*', fanatical followers of the Aga Khan. They were never brought to trial, because while they were still in prison awaiting trial, they were found to be poisoned. It was stated that they had committed suicide.

As will have been seen in the first chapter of this work, down the centuries there had been a constant stream of assassinations in the Aga Khan's family, crimes of violence through which the leadership of the Ismaili Moslems had been won and lost. If in

this particular crime in 1896 there was a motive provided by a family feud, the echoes of it were only to be found in the publications put out in English and in the vernacular, by the so-called Reform Party.

The particular grievance of this Party may be found in the allegation contained in recurring 'Open Letters', namely, that 'the major portion of the hard-earned income of your followers regularly goes to provide for the personal expenditure of Your Highness, which is evidence of the state of benighted ignorance in which they are deliberately kept'.

The deeds of the present Aga Khan answer these allegations in ample manner, as will be shown at a later stage.

Despite the unpleasant atmosphere created around the personality of the young Aga Khan by the double murder, there were, on the other hand, two very gratifying events.

In 1893, three years before the Aga Khan was to start for London, there had been sanguinary Hindu-Moslem riots. Lady Ali Shah and her sixteen-year-old son gave stern orders to the Ismaili Moslems that they were to remain indoors and abstain from participation in the riots, thus affording the British and Indian authorities very considerable help, assistance that was certainly not forgotten. Also, when famine struck India, Lady Ali Shah, at her own expense, fed thousands, Hindus and Moslems alike, in the Bombay Presidency. This then was the backstage setting for the Westward journey of the Aga Khan, a journey that was to prove so momentous for him.

The Aga Khan was a shy young man. He had met few 'Europeans', as the English are called in India. He had spent many hours in religious studies, as his mother demanded, but he had not neglected the study of European languages, as well as those of the Orient. His flawless English, although marked with the Oriental accent that has remained with him through life, was followed closely by a good speaking knowledge of French and

German. What he lacked were human contacts. His England was naturally the England of Victoria, but it was by no means an up-to-date England. It was a book knowledge, but the books were Thackeray's, Macaulay's and Justin McCarthy's. A noble and robust background certainly, but in this Westward journey the young Aga Khan was somewhat like the coffin of his illustrious forebear, Mohammed, suspended twixt earth and heaven, although he may not have been sure which was which, the one he was going to, or the one he was coming from.

And so to England he went, an England already talking of 'Sixty Years a Queen' and preparing for Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. The ex-Radical Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, was arranging a great and spendid ceremony.

The night before he sailed from Bombay a party was given to wish him God Speed. It was a small affair, a gathering of leading Europeans (English) and Indians. How he was to acquit himself was of the greatest importance and few of those who were present on that occasion could have imagined the extent of the success this inexperienced young man was to achieve. No doubt his mother's prayers went with him, for she realised only too well the meaning of both failure and success. But the success was to transcend all her imaginings.

The Queen's son, the Duke of Connaught, the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, and the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton, were at Windsor to meet him, so it was no wonder he was overwhelmed by his reception. No ruling Prince from India, who held great temporal power, could have been treated with greater honour and respect. The Duke of Connaught, in India, had met the Aga Khan when he was a small boy, but the Aga Khan did not recall him with any clarity. And the Great White Queen, what impression did she make on the young man?

It is a trait in the Aga Khan's character that whereas he will

speak with considerable candour and without restraint of the numerous foreign royal persons and other outstanding public personages with whom he has been acquainted during the course of his long life, he appears to feel that he should put a voluntary curb on his tongue when speaking of the British Royal Family. I have noticed this frequently. Once when speaking of a Queen of Sweden, the wife of the late King Gustav, he said: 'They tell me no-one can approach her, she smells so badly.' This was said in no spirit of spiteful tittle-tattle, but as plain and unvarnished historic *raportage*, which it was. Her late Majesty suffered from a very rare female disease that carries with it just the unfortunate complication to which His Highness referred.

The Aga Khan is one of the few men alive to-day who has been well acquainted with five British Sovereigns, from Queen Victoria to her two great-grandsons, Edward VIII and George VI. To the old Queen he was just a boy, but an important boy. With Edward VII, he became on friendly man-of-the-world terms. It is understood that he gave financial advice to George V. When Edward VIII became Duke of Windsor, that prince recognised a kindred spirit in the Aga Khan, and they are often to be seen together at parties on the French Riviera. His relations with the late King George VI were austere and did not exist beyond the formal stage. In those far-off days of 1896, when he attended his first State Banquet at Windsor Castle, one may wonder how the Aga Khan reacted.

He has never said very much about his innermost feelings, and probably for reasons already explained, but the Queen placed him next to her on her right at the Banquet and he said afterwards: 'She was awfully kind.'

This is no understatement. His Highness was obviously very impressed with the trouble she had taken to learn some words of Hindustani; possibly she was naïvely surprised that her Indian Princes spoke better English than she did herself, but the Aga

Khan, with his quick working brain, soon understood that Lord Beaconsfield had built better than he knew. In making his Queen Empress of India, he had secured India for Britain as nothing else could have done; the British Crown was no longer some far-off mystical object, it became something worn by a human person, India's own Empress.

The Aga Khan's name having appeared in the Court Circular, it was natural enough that many people became anxious to meet him. Among them was Miss Florence Nightingale. The Aga Khan appears to have made far more impression on her than she did on him. Of Miss Nightingale, His Highness said: 'She was very interesting.' Of the Aga Khan, Miss Nightingale noted: 'A most interesting man, but one is never likely to teach him sanitation.' In some ways, Miss Nightingale showed considerable perception.

In point of fact, when addressing his followers, the Aga Khan frequently exhorts them to breathe clean air, to drink clean water and to keep their bodies clean, to bathe frequently, so in those premises Miss Nightingale's prophecy has proved entirely false, but Orientals have codes of their own, codes that do not always measure up to Western standards. For example, when ex-King Amanullah of Afghanistan was a house guest at Buckingham Palace, his personal habits caused shocked surprise to some of the Palace attendants, but if the ex-King had ever learned of their surprise, his surprise would have exceeded theirs. So with His Highness, the Aga Khan. See him breakfasting in bed at the Ritz Hotel, Paris, talking jovially the while, and then negligently wiping his mouth with the bed sheet, might well shock an unprepared Western visitor. But why? His Highness is, as we know, a highly cultured and educated man from the East. Those last three words are the operative ones. It is neither his pride of position nor his prejudice against Western ways that urge him to do just as Nature prompts him; the promptings of Nature are

very important to a gentleman from the Orient, whether he is in bed or not, or whether he is a prince or not. One should understand that, if one is entertaining a gentleman from those far-off countries. Also, one should understand that, when one is entertaining an Indian to dinner, and he belches, that is not a sign of a lack of knowledge of Western manners, but just a polite indication that the guest has sincerely enjoyed his meal. In fact, two or more belches indicate that the guest has enjoyed the meal very much indeed.

Once I said to His Highness: 'To the West you are the East, and to the East you are the West.' He liked that very much. It is quite true. He might have discovered the truism for himself. When he first came to us, fifty-six years ago, he brought with him the glamour of the East, but he had not yet thought about the importance of being a Western influence in the East. Yet in the course of time he became so, swinging like a pendulum between the East and the West, but gradually the pendulum became magnetised by the West. He tried—and in many ways succeeded—in giving his Eastern affairs absent treatment. Once he stayed away for eight years, and his old mother had to come to Europe to fetch him back. Now we are concerned only with those early approaches to the West, journeys that formed his character and which gave him fully the right to call himself, as he does, 'an Internationalist'.

The first visit to England was of short duration. It had been a very great success, but Lady Ali Shah wished her son to return to India. Feeling between Moslems and Hindus was running very high again and once more there was the fear of rioting breaking out, but there was also another reason. Lady Ali Shah wished her son to marry. She had chosen a wife for him, his cousin Shahzadin, daughter of the murdered uncle, Aga Janzi Shah. One does not know, of course, one cannot know, whether any rumours had reached her, but Lady Ali Shah's son was a

virile young Oriental—and a very wealthy one to boot. The fact that he was a Holy Man was not a matter of concern to her, or anybody else. To many white women, even in Queen Victoria's day, a wealthy Indian was an attraction, and the Aga Khan has never made a secret of his *penchant* for women. There is little doubt that even if Lady Ali Shah had no fear that her son would marry an Unbeliever, she was nevertheless of the opinion that it would be better for him to return to his own country, marry and 'settle down'. So back to India the Aga Khan went, promising to return the following year to attend Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The marriage that his mother arranged for the Aga Khan did not take place, however, until a year later, when he reached the age of twenty-one. Before it occurred, in 1897, he returned to Europe with a determination to see more of the world than his first visit had permitted. But before coming to Europe on the second occasion he visited German East Africa, where he had—and has—millions of followers, among whom are some of the wealthiest. This visit was to have an unexpected repercussion later on, in Germany.

It was remarked in London that the Aga Khan aged twenty was a very different person from the timid young man of nineteen, who had visited Windsor in the previous year. He appeared now to have gained in stature. He was still extremely modest and even diffident, except on occasions when he spoke his mind and showed that he had a most extraordinary grasp of world affairs.

When he first came, England was already having trouble with the Boers. The Jameson Raid had come to an untimely end. Now, a year later, troops from all parts of Her Majesty's Empire were gathered to do her honour, but from South Africa there came the dulled rumblings of warlike thunder. Yet Diamond Jubilee Year was the apotheosis of the might and power of the British Empire. Now across the North Sea another power was rising. There was

talk of 'the mailed fist' of the Queen's grandson, the German Kaiser. Quietly the Aga Khan made up his mind to go to see him. Firstly, however, he had to attend the Diamond Jubilee festivities.

In an open landau drawn by the famous horses and their outriders, the Queen drove from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's Cathedral. On one side of her carriage rode her son, the Prince of Wales, on the other side Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. The cheers were for the old Queen, but the 'oh's' and 'ah's' of admiration were for the Indian Princes, who, in their native costumes, rode at the back of the Royal carriage. It was 'Queen's weather', bright June sunshine, and the London scene glittered with the jewels the Maharajahs wore in their turbans. The temporal Princes were bedecked with fabulous rubies and diamonds, but unminded by the crowds was a spiritual Prince who could have bought out many of the temporal Princes and not counted the cost. He was the Aga Khan, in Savile Row clothes, a quietly composed young man, remarking and weighing up all that was going on around him.

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations brought to an end the Aga Khan's second visit to England: then he set out on the next stage of his Grand Tour; he journeyed to Potsdam.

The Kaiser Wilhelm II was not then on good terms with his English grandmother, and it is not impossible, knowing the curious workings of the Kaiser's mind, that he was nothing loth in 'making a fuss' of the young Indian, who had, so he heard, been treated with such marks of favour by Queen Victoria's family. His Highness the Aga Khan was invited to visit the German Emperor at Sans Souci. The ostensible reason for the visit was a personal report the Aga Khan wished to make concerning some of his followers in German East Africa.

There had been some troubles in the German colony where the Khojas were suspected of having worked up feeling against

the local German authorities. The Khojas were originally Hindus who became converted to the Ismaili faith by a Shah of Persia who went especially to India for that purpose. The Khojas were therefore followers of the Aga Khan. Many migrated to East and South Africa, where they became rich merchant traders.

The Aga Khan, with considerable tact, began his first conversation with the Kaiser by thanking him for the way in which he had been received in East Africa. The Kaiser was pleased, and grandiosely announced that he would place the Aga Khan under his 'protection', no doubt thinking that this would be a snub to his grandmother, Queen Victoria.

The Emperor and the Aga Khan then discussed the Khojas. The Aga Khan was at pains to show that his people had no political aspirations in the then German colony, but they did have grievances. For years the Khojas had been seeking rice growing concessions along the banks of the River Ufigi, but the Germans always refused them. These concessions the Aga Khan was able to obtain from the Kaiser. The Aga Khan then sought means to raise the status of his followers in East Africa. Here, too, he was successful. When he was questioned as to the impression the Kaiser had made on him, the Aga Khan merely said: 'He is certainly a great man.'

It must be remembered that despite the judgement History has passed on Kaiser Wilhelm II, and before saying that the Aga Khan was a poor judge of people, both Theodore Roosevelt and the first Lord Northcliffe, men who claimed to be first-class judges of humanity, appeared to share the Aga Khan's opinion of the Kaiser.

This first visit to Germany, in 1897, was followed by many others; in fact they continued intermittently right down to the eve of the Second World War, when the Aga Khan, an enthusiastic 'Müncheneer', had a serio-comic audience with Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

While the Aga Khan was negotiating with the Kaiser, preparations were afoot in India for his nuptials. The sixteen-year-old bride, Shahzadin, was to be married at Poona, amidst such scenes of splendour as are usually associated with the *cliché* of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainment'. Unhappily tragedy was near at hand. The bridegroom's homecoming was marred by ritualistic bloodshed and yet another murder in the Aga Khan's family.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE AT POONA

JOURNEYING BACK TO India the Aga Khan may well have found his thoughts straying backwards and forwards between the West and the East. Maybe he was already hearing the siren call of the West. But perhaps the mind of this still seemingly diffident young man momentarily dwelt on an action that had antedated his travels and had caused an enthusiast, not without reason be it admitted, to refer to the Aga Khan as 'an Indian Dr. Jenner'.

Reference has already been made to the scourge of bubonic plague that had swept India, when His Highness's mother, Lady Ali Shah, had succoured the victims with money, but her son, while participating in the financial effort, literally turned himself into a human sacrifice.

In 1897, before the Aga Khan's departure for Europe, Indian and European doctors fighting the plague found themselves hampered by the ignorance and superstition of people who refused inoculation, preferring to risk death itself. The Aga Khan offered himself for public inoculation. People were amazed, awe-stricken. Their opinions changed in a flash and in thousands they now offered themselves to the prick of the needle. 'If this Holy Man, who has the gift of curing by the laying on of hands, believes and visibly suffers no harm by the white man's magic', they seemed to argue, 'who are we to deny ourselves?'

News travels fast in the bazaars of India, but taking no chances of recanting from afar, the Aga Khan, with the calm cynicism that has been one of his life-long characteristics, offered himself again and again in full public view to the assault of the needle. The milling throngs, of course, did not know that on these demonstrative occasions the needle was innocent of all serum.

That was one of the great moments of his younger life, a life that had not yet been lived so very publicly. So far as the East was concerned, it had been spectacular only when it touched the spiritual life of his followers. The public inoculations were no exception.

But now he was on his way to another spectacular moment, his wedding to his first cousin, the youthful Shahzadin.

Rumour reached him—and he knew his bride by rumour only—that she was not beautiful. Maybe he who in later life so often quoted proverbs, consoled himself with one of Solomon's sayings concerning virtuous women and the price of rubies, but what were rubies—or virtue—to a young man whose status and wealth enabled him to purchase either, and to summon both by smacking together the palms of his hands?

India, now, a brown smudge on the far horizon. Then Bombay, the Gateway to India. The Apollo Bunder and Bombay on parade. The people crowding the quays as the big liner docked. Friends greeting friends and waiting to adorn them with the strong but sweet smelling jasmine *leis*. The West had somehow vanished, shut away behind, out of sight somewhere back of the stern of the liner.

There was the Lady Ali Shah to meet and greet her son, so wonderfully home again from his triumphs in Europe. She was waiting now to take him to Poona for his nuptials. But after she had embraced and garlanded him, there were grave-faced advisors in the near-background waiting for speech.

The Moslem-Hindu racial troubles had flared up once more. Now again the military had been called out to deal with racial riots. There was bloodshed, the Aga Khan was told, and there might well be more. The Viceroy was counting on him to take stern measures again. His followers must not participate. But if the Hindus are the provocators? Even so, there must be forbearance. What is it this time, the usual careless treatment of a

sacred cow by a Moslem? Not so. It appeared that a Hindu religious procession passed a Mosque during a Moslem religious ceremony and that caused the first riot. Maybe that was but the spark that set alight the highly explosive matter that was heavily stacked almost everywhere.

Gone now were the glistening silk top hat, the shining patent leather shoes, the beautifully built morning coat, the striped cashmere trousers and the Bond Street shirts. The really happy man, as the story goes which the Aga Khan loves to tell, had no shirt at all, and this day when the Holy Man who had just stepped off the liner from Europe went to the Mosque, it might have been remarked that he, too, wore no shirt, in the European sense of the word. He wore now the head-dress of a Moslem of rank and title, the grey astrakhan tarboosh, also the robes and trappings that befitted his position in the world.

Now his feet were encased in Oriental slippers. He looked neither odd nor out of place, any more than he did in Western attire, when in what the newspaper reporters of the day called 'immaculate evening dress' he sat on the immediate right of the Queen at a Royal Banquet at Windsor Castle.

In this year of 1898 there were great events stirring the world, drawing public attention away from India. Russia was forced to cede Port Arthur to Japan. The American battleship *Maine* was blown up in Havana harbour; Spain and the U.S.A. went to War. John Bull scanned the headlines in his morning paper and yawned mightily when he saw the item: 'Hindu-Moslem Riots'. 'There are *always* riots in India. Why can't they behave themselves?' When there was another case of murder in the prospective bridegroom's family, it never even achieved a headline in the newspapers at home. But Queen Victoria sent her young visitor a wedding present. She made him a G.C.I.E., his first British honour.

Hard on the heels of the news of the Hindu-Moslem troubles came tidings from Poona of grave import to the Aga Khan and

his mother. From the city where the wedding festivities had been held it was learned that another relative of the young Prince had been assassinated.

In August of that year (1898) Hashim Shah, a cousin of the bride, was shot dead by Jiva Jooma, a *fidavi* (fanatical follower of the Aga Khan). But the murdered man was also a cousin of the bridegroom, because he was the son of the older of the two half-brothers of the Aga Khan, both of whom met with untimely deaths, and stood ahead of the Aga Khan in the line of succession to the Imamate of the Ismaili Moslems. The atrocious crime at Poona was, of course, an echo of those other murders in the Aga Khan's family, crimes committed long ago in the 'Valley of the Assassins'.

The criminal, Jiva Jooma, was tried and sentenced to transportation for life. Records of such trials in India were always badly kept, so badly in fact that at times they tended to disappear altogether. It is thus quite impossible to learn any more than the very bare facts. What motive, if any, there was for the murder of the cousin of the bride and bridegroom one does not know.

One of the many grievances of the Khoja Reform Party was that when a crime was committed by a *fidavi*, a crime of violence, the accused were always defended by leaders of the Indian Bar, although the accused notoriously were penniless people, the allegation being that the defence was paid from the funds at the disposal of the Aga Khan. This somehow was linked to the sinister suggestion that the Aga Khan was personally aware of the intended actions of the criminal.

The Aga Khan in practice rarely troubles to make a public refutation of these allegations, possibly with the knowledge that such refutation usually tends to attract even wider attention. But it must be said that if the *entourage* of the Aga Khan does pay for the defence of prisoners who are closely connected with the Moslem sect of which His Highness is the leader, such payments

must be regarded as being perfectly natural. The millions of pounds voluntarily subscribed by the Ismaili Moslems during the past sixty-five years were intended for the Aga Khan to dispense as His Highness pleases. That a small portion, even an infinitesimal part, should be devoted to the defence of those whose acts of fanaticism bring discredit to the sect as a whole should not be a subject of a grievance.

It may be remarked that despite all the written attacks made on him during the course of his long life, the Aga Khan has fortunately never been the object of armed assault, although during the first World War, when he was acting as a British Secret Agent, he was twice threatened with death.

There were no fewer than 25,000 guests who accepted the invitation to the Poona wedding. From all over India the guests had come, ranging from the ruling Princes of the country, who arrived in all their gorgeous trappings of Eastern splendour, to the hosts of Indian Government officials and thousands and thousands of the poorest of India's poor. There were the blind and the maimed, the dumb and those wretched people who in Bombay and Calcutta were dragged backwards by their relatives to exhibit their wounds and deformities to disgusted tourists, meanwhile whining: 'Alms, for the love of Allah, alms!' Now Allah was good, the descendant of his Prophet, the Aga Khan, was being married, and there was food and drink for all.

The Princes came wearing huge diamonds in their turbans, and deep blue sapphires, deep green emeralds and dark red rubies, so big that they are always compared with pigeons' eggs. Never in the memory of anyone present had such scenes of splendour been seen on the hills and plains of Poona, now covered with the tented temporary homes of the guests.

The festivities continued for fourteen days and nights and were said to have cost £50,000, an enormous sum of money for the India of 1898.

The Aga Khan was married. His mother was a happy woman. There was much work to do for her son, she thought. He had palaces scattered all over India, nine of them. He had 1,000 servants ready to obey the slightest wish of his Begum or himself. His mother thought that her twenty-one-year-old son would pass the rest of his life among his people, beget many sons as becomes a good Moslem and be a joy to her for ever more.

But perhaps his own thoughts were of a certain Wednesday in the previous June. He had been taken to Epsom to see the Derby run and there he had been presented once again to the Prince of Wales! What a day that was to be sure!

'I shall never all my life forget the thrill of my first Derby,' said the Aga Khan some years later. 'I stood there,' he said, 'gripping the rails as the horses thundered round Tattenham Corner and began to climb the hill. I heard the people shouting "Jeddah! Jeddah!" It was an outsider and it won at odds of 100-1.' Did the Aga Khan, one wonders, that day dream that in 1930, forty-three years later, he would himself win the Derby? It was a curious coincidence that the name of the winner of that Derby, Jeddah, is the name of one of the chief Moslem holy cities. But an even bigger thrill, no doubt, for the Aga Khan, was being with the Prince of Wales, because from that meeting the Prince made a friend of the young Aga Khan, so many years his junior. The Prince put the young man up for membership of his own very exclusive club, the Marlborough. He was not only a member of the Marlborough but a member of the Prince's own very special 'set'. The Aga Khan had 'arrived'.

But now he was miles and miles away in Poona. Then with that calm and decisive way he has, the Aga Khan announced to his bride and his mother that the honeymoon would be continued—alone. He was himself going back to Europe.

He sailed almost immediately afterwards on his third approach to the West.

CHAPTER V

THE GRAND TOUR

AT THE MOMENT when he left India and his young wife to resume his European visits, the Aga Khan, little more than twenty-one years of age, seemed to have had a very detailed plan in his mind. Firstly to resume his contacts in England and Germany, then to pay a round of visits to the European capitals and make the acquaintance, if possible, of the heads of the States. Then to go to Rome and establish contact with the Pope. Finally, and most importantly to him, to go to Constantinople and there visit the Caliph of all the Moslems, the Sultan Abdul Hamid. All these things, and more, the Aga Khan achieved.

We must see him now, his Eastern apparel left behind him, once again wearing formal European clothes, a rimless monocle in his right eye. He arrived in London and became a familiar of the Prince of Wales's set, the people of whom Suburbia spoke behind a hand, whispering that those young men were 'fast'.

The Boer War had plunged England into gloom, but the Aga Khan wanted to 'go to the Front', to get into uniform and fight for his friends, the English. The War Office could not, or would not, make use of his services, so he continued his Grand Tour. Britain's prestige was at a low ebb, as the Aga Khan found when he went to Vienna. Here he made the acquaintance of the nephew of the old Emperor Francis Joseph, the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, whose murder at Sarajevo fifteen years later began the first World War. The Aga Khan describes the Archduke Ferdinand as being 'like granite'.

Then His Highness went to St. Petersburg and sought an audience with Czar Nicolas. This visit was not one of idle curiosity. In those days, in the years immediately before the first

War, India feared invasion by Russia. On the North-West Frontier, a district of very particular interest to the Aga Khan, Russian agents had been very active. This phase of Indian history was very near to the heart of Rudyard Kipling, who dealt with it in a one-act play entitled *The Man Who Was*. For the Aga Khan, the 'Little Father', Czar Nicolas, was a despot, the all-powerful one who could move millions of men to war by pressing a button. His power was reputed to be greater than that of any European Sovereign, and India had a great interest in him. The two men, therefore, would have found mutual interests, but the Aga Khan wished to find out certain matters for himself. Rumours had reached him, by what is to-day called the grape-vine route, of subterranean rumblings in Russia, of underground revolutionary activities. It would be foolish to affirm that 'the Aga Khan is always right'. History on several occasions has proved him very wrong indeed, but the fact remains that with regard to certain European countries His Highness's prophecies have been remarkably correct. Russia was a case in point. He dismissed Russia momentarily as a potential invader of India, but clearly foresaw that the ultimate result of the Russian defeat by Japan would lead to her complete undoing, an undoing that another war would only hasten.

The Aga Khan had an audience with the Czar late one night at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The Russian habit of late night appointments, it should be noted, has not been changed by the present Bolshevik Government. The Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs once gave me an appointment for midnight and kept me waiting until two a.m.

The Czar received the Aga Khan on his return from a theatre. His Highness described the Czar as being 'abrupt and irritable', but later he heard (he was developing his talent for hearing things) that the Czar had received bad news while he was at the theatre. A few words that conjure up a wealth of possibility.

The Aga Khan went to Germany and while he was there Queen Victoria died. It was a sad moment for the man who had first received kindness in England from the hands of the Great White Queen. He immediately cabled to India to order his disciples to observe three days of strict mourning for the Queen. Both the Kaiser and the Aga Khan went to London for the funeral.

His Highness then went back to India before returning once more to Europe to continue his travels and studies.

The visit to Rome he had planned because he had followed very closely the methods by which the Vatican exercises its spiritual power. He had begun to do this when quite young by watching the methods of the Vatican-trained Oriental missionaries, whose work he held in very great admiration. But he had—and has—even greater admiration for the way in which the Vatican operates as a diplomatic listening-post. Not the least of the power the Aga Khan has over his disciples and his followers is by his own grape-vine route. For very many years now his personal relations with the Vatican have been most cordial, and it may be regarded as an established fact that the Aga Khan's own personal exceptionally well-informed diplomatic service comes from having set up such cordial relations with the Vatican in the long ago.

A very good example of this service and its importance occurs to mind in connection with Central European affairs soon after the end of the 1914–18 War. Long before Hitler there was desultory talk of an *Anschluss* between defeated Germany and defeated Austria. The British and French Governments opposed this. The German and Austrian peoples, stunned by defeat, were too hungry to give the matter much thought. In Paris one day there was a conversation at which the Aga Khan and myself were present. The question of the *Anschluss* came up. 'It will go through, eventually', stated the Aga Khan. We others did not

think so; for one thing, the rump State of Austria would not want to be saddled with a share of the German War Debt. 'Nevertheless, it will go through eventually', insisted the Aga Khan. 'Why?' 'Because the Vatican wishes it. South Germany is Roman Catholic; Austria is Roman Catholic. The joining up of the two will make the most powerful Roman Catholic State in Europe.'

The Aga Khan, speaking with knowledge, was both right and wrong. He, no more than the Pope and his advisers, could foresee Hitler and his undermining of the German Roman Catholics.

The Aga Khan went to London for the postponed Coronation of King Edward VII. His Highness brought the King an Indian lion as a present. The King sent the lion to the Dublin Zoological Gardens. His Highness also presented a casket that had cost £1,000. The casket and the Address it contained was from His Highness's Moslem followers.

The Aga Khan's appearance at Westminster Abbey, at the Coronation of King Edward VII, caught the attention of the London Correspondent of the *Irish Times*, who wrote: 'The Aga Khan was completely disguised in a flowing robe of a colour and pattern that was very sober when compared to the gorgeous raiment worn by some of the distinguished persons near him.' The Aga Khan sat in the same row as Prince Henry of Prussia, who was representing his brother the German Kaiser.

There began then yet another colourful chapter in the Westernised life of the Oriental potentate, the Aga Khan. He spoke in London at a Civil Service Dinner and made a very great impression. He became an intimate at Buckingham Palace, where the King gave him several private audiences, 'but,' says the Aga Khan, with a chuckle, 'not *all* my visits there were recorded in the Court Circular!'

The King especially recommended the Aga Khan to his son the Duke of York, who had become Prince of Wales, and his daughter-in-law, Princess Mary. As the personal guest of the Princess, the Aga Khan attended the Royal Military Review at Aldershot. Although the British public still knew very little about His Highness and it was still years away from the time when he became, as a prominent race-horse owner, a public figure, his name appeared frequently now in the Press, and he attracted much sympathy when in a public speech he referred to the 'fostering care of a gifted and far-seeing mother, the daughter of the famous Nizam-ud-Dailah', but, alas, only a handful of Oriental scholars had heard of him.

The Aga Khan went to Paris to meet his kinsman, the Shah of Persia, and accompanied him on a fortnight's visit to Ostend. The Belgian seaside resort in those early Edwardian days had a reputation for 'giddiness', but the Shah took the Aga Khan along with him to try and pick his brains. The Shah wanted to know how many British troops were then stationed in India and whether the Indian people as a whole were loyal to the British Crown.

The Aga Khan said about this conversation: 'I assured the Shah that in my opinion there were no people more loyal than the Indian people. But from what I heard among the Shah's officers, I judged that there was a great amount of soreness felt that Persia was not given an Ambassador of European diplomatic standing, but was allowed only an Indian official. Russia, on the other hand, sent prominent members of her diplomatic corps. Persia was bound to keep friendly with Russia, but she wished to remain equally friendly with Great Britain.' This conversation, which took place fifty years ago, when there was a Czarist Government in Russia, might well make students of world affairs to-day pause and think.

The Aga Khan was passing much time in Europe, but he was

not neglecting his religious affairs in the East; besides, his mother, Lady Ali Shah, was there to organise and direct. It is worthy of note, however, that it was at this time that the Aga Khan made his first known direct reference to his wealth. Britain had won the Boer War. The Aga Khan said he was very glad and he added: 'I have very considerable investments there.'

CHAPTER VI

ANOTHER WEDDING: ANOTHER JOURNEY

IN 1908, WHEN the Aga Khan was thirty-one years old, two important events occurred in his life; he married his first European wife, and at the behest of King Edward he undertook a visit to the Caliph at Constantinople.

Before his second marriage, the Aga Khan had established his European headquarters at Aix-les-Bains, where he took the waters, but Aix-les-Bains had another and greater advantage for him; it is close to the Swiss frontier and not very far from Lausanne which was—and is—a useful European listening post for Asiatic and particularly Indian affairs. Lausanne University used to have a number of Indian students and during the more active years of his life, the Aga Khan was frequently to be seen there. It was a most interesting place for him; a listening post as useful as the Vatican, and it was perhaps something he learned in Lausanne that induced him to undertake his trip to Constantinople, although it was very definitely a request from King Edward that actually started him on his journey.

King Edward himself was showing the very greatest interest in foreign affairs, much to the dislike of his nephew, the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II. The King went to Lisbon, Rome, Vienna, Paris, Berlin and Brussels; to Constantinople he could not go, but his young friend, His Highness the Aga Khan could.

The reasons the King desired the visit—and a report—were valid ones. The Caliph at Constantinople was the Sultan Abdul Hamid, known both as the 'Sick Man of Europe' and 'Abdul the Damned'. This because Gladstone had said of him that he was 'immortally, beyond all mortals, damned', chiefly because of his ferocity towards his Christian subjects, the Armenians. Of them, the Sultan said that the only way to get rid of the Armenian

Question was by getting rid of the Armenians, so in 1896 he had 6,000 of them butchered in his capital Constantinople.

In 1908 Germany was already wooing Turkey; this was worrying both Whitehall and the Quai d'Orsay. On the Sultan's birthday the Kaiser sent him a signed photograph of himself and the Imperial Family. Actually, the Concert of the Powers had, with regard to Turkey, a dividing line. On one side, Germany and Austro-Hungary, with Italy lagging a little behind. On the other side were Britain and France, but between these neighbours there was a coolness born of the still remembered Fashoda incident. St. Petersburg was, as usual, an enigma. So the young Aga Khan was a kind of Ambassador-at-large, eager enough and willing enough to trade international diplomatic secrets against matters of importance to himself and his followers.

One of the Oriental apologists for the Aga Khan, commenting on His Highness's visit to the Caliph at Constantinople, compared this visit to a suppositious one paid by an Archbishop of Canterbury to the Pope of Rome, but it must be remembered that both the Caliph and the Imam of the Ismaili Moslems—Sultan of Turkey and the Aga Khan—held hereditary positions, whereas the respective heads of the Christian Churches do not. Moreover, the Pope had no temporal power, whereas the Caliph had immense temporal power. The real significance of the visit was quite otherwise. It created a tremendous amount of excitement in the Islamic world and was the talk of the bazaars for more than a year. The Moslems, naturally, saw nothing but the religious significance. They asked one another: did it mean a healing of the breach that had existed for hundreds of years?

The Caliph-Sultan held sway over millions of Moslems, how many millions it is not possible to know. In point of fact, the actual number of the Aga Khan's followers is also not known precisely. The number has been placed as high as fifty millions and as low as eight millions. On one occasion only has the Aga

Khan ever made a direct reference to the number of his followers, and then he placed the figure at twenty million, but Sir Frank Brown, a leading British authority on the subject and a man who has been associated with the Aga Khan for more than forty years, places the figure at approximately ten million.

The Caliph was a member of the House of Osman, a family of the Sunni sect of Moslems, who had revived the Caliphate, combining temporal and spiritual power, whereas, it will be recalled, the Aga Khan's ancestors in the long ago had abandoned their claim to temporal power, although for a period the present Aga Khan's grandfather had, as ruler of a Persian province, held temporal power under the Shah. Would the two men, one who was becoming Westernised, and the other still clinging to the despotic methods of the East, meet on a footing of equality? Hence the buzz of excitement in the bazaars.

Perhaps to the millions in Asia who only heard news by word of mouth, the result of the meeting was an anti-climax; for to them nothing came of it. It might have been merely a visit of courtesy, but to the Foreign Offices of the West this historic meeting had another meaning entirely.

Western Ambassadors to the Sublime Porte could merely report back rumours that reached them, but the Aga Khan, as has been shown, had built up a highly geared intelligence service of his own, and it was working perfectly.

The Aga Khan says that when he arrived in Turkey he was reading a biography of the Amir of Afghanistan. A Customs official confiscated it as 'dangerous literature', 'although', comments the Aga Khan, 'he could only understand Turkish and a little French'.

His Highness found that the executives of the Young Turks, the Revolutionary Party, were meeting in a disused cistern. The Revolution was on the march; the days of 'Abdul the Damned' were obviously numbered. Indeed, in the following year the

Sultan was forced to abdicate, although at the time of His Highness's visit, the Sultan had, too late, granted Turkey a Constitution.

In the previous year Turkey had won a War against Greece; the Aga Khan had a look at the Turkish soldiery. Their bearing impressed him. He found, however, that they were badly paid, although they were well fed. So well, in fact, that they were able to sell part of their rations to the less well fed civilians.

'In India,' said the Aga Khan shrewdly, 'the dirtiest parts of the cities are the native quarters. In Constantinople the dirtiest section is the European Quarter. The possible reason for this is that the Government grant for sanitation and drainage is very small.'

These items classified by the Aga Khan may read merely as Turkish trivia to the uninitiated, but even to-day reports made by members of the Political Intelligence Division are based on just such 'trivia', because, pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle, trivia give a very complete picture of a situation. In any case, the Aga Khan's visit to Constantinople was a success—for the West.

A son was born to the Begum Aga Khan, an event that caused much rejoicing among his millions of followers and also to his mother, the Lady Ali Shah, who as ever was looking after her son's interests in the East while he was busy in the West. Now the Aga Khan was once more free to return to the East, but not for long. Events, both domestic and international, caused his return. His Heir-Apparent died in infancy and was buried in Monaco.

Turkey began to cause grave concern to the Moslem world. The dethroned Sultan was succeeded by his brother. Turkey might have enjoyed a period of peace but she was attacked by Italy in Tripoli and defeated. This caused a shock in Islam. The Aga Khan met with difficulties among his followers, difficulties he was trying to appease when a second war broke out in which Turkey was involved. The Balkan League formed by the Greek

statesman, M. Venizelos, linked the Balkan countries together in an attempt to drive Turkey out of Europe. Once again the Aga Khan was deeply involved with his followers and succeeded in preventing a general uprising against the Infidels.

In June, 1910, the Begum Aga Khan gave birth to a second son, in Turin. He was named Ali Solomon Khan. Again there was great rejoicing and festivities among the Ismailis. But a month before the birth of his second son the Aga Khan's great friend, Edward VII, died. The Aga Khan went to London for the funeral and returned again the following year for the Coronation of George V, who made him a Grand Commander of the Star of India; he had been made a Grand Commander of the Indian Empire nine years previously.

Loaded with honours and happy with his wife and infant son, His Highness would have asked nothing better than to have the opportunity to lead a felicitous life with them, but he was now caught up in the maelstrom of the Near East, where the Second Balkan War was raging, with its repercussions among the Moslem people. The whole of Islam was feeling the tremors sent out by Turkey. Apart from having to swing like a human pendulum between East and West, with little opportunity to attend to his paternal duties, the Aga Khan felt that a bigger conflagration than now burned in Turkey would soon set fire to the world. Yet his duties to his followers were making an ever-growing demand on him. He was due to visit his people in East Africa, but he had postponed his journey because now in 1913 the end of the Balkan War was near and he had to do his best for the Turks. Behind the Peace Conference scenes he made his influence felt, fighting hard so that the unhappy Turks should salvage something from their wreck. Then, in 1914, he set out for East Africa.

CHAPTER VII

'. . . THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY . . . '

THE ART OF seeing oneself truly and justly is a difficult one for ordinary mortals, therefore, how much more so must it be for a god, a fabulous personage such as the Aga Khan? His writings and his speeches, however, must in some ways reflect his personality, perhaps not entirely as it really is, although parts of it are undoubtedly truly reflected; but at least they do portray this very complicated potentate as he sees himself.

Some years ago the Aga Khan wrote an article about what he called 'My Finest Hour'. In part he wrote: 'To most people in this country [Britain] I'm known as a thoroughly Westernised man of affairs, a man who loves the theatre, the good restaurant and the racecourse—a man who has learned to enjoy the pleasures and the excitements of Western life, and who, most fortunate of all, has the money to gratify most of his whims, however expensive they may be.

'By every race-goer in the British Isles and, indeed, by every one who reads the newspapers, I am regarded as a man who has gambled in thousands at Epsom and Ascot, an owner of numerous racehorses, who has won and lost huge sums at the Sport of Kings.

'Probably they would say my greatest hour must have been that in which I heard I had won—as I often have won—one or more of your big races.

'But they would be wrong.

'Probably those people, again, who know me as a statesman and diplomat, would have other ideas.

'I have headed the Indian Delegation at Geneva, and worked hard for years in political matters to ensure the future happiness

of India. I have, I feel sure, enjoyed many great hours hearing of the success of some of my efforts in this field.

'But . . . my greatest hour has had no connection with the racecourse or with the political arena.

'My greatest hour—I have no doubt of it—occurs regularly every week. It is on a Friday, and invariably sometime after noon. Every Friday I, like every other Moslem in the world, spend an hour in meditation and prayer. That hour is my greatest hour. The little instrument which lies before me as I write—a watch and compass combined, which I carry with me wherever I go—tells me the time has come, and it also tells me in what direction I am to turn.

'Always I must turn towards Mecca, the Arabian town where my ancestor, Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam, founded and practised the Mohammedan religion.

'I am a direct descendant of the Prophet, and a large number of the Mohammedan faith to-day, numbering about twenty millions—acknowledge me as their head. They pay me tribute, and worship me who has the blood of their Prophet in his veins.

'I am a very busy man, and it is on very few occasions indeed that I find myself in the Moslem mosques at Woking or in Paris. If I cannot go there, I simply kneel down wherever I happen to be—it may be in an hotel in Paris, London or Monte Carlo; it may be on the sleeping car of a trans-Continental express; it may be on the lakeside at Geneva; it may be in a London park.

'My way of life has taken me, from the slowly changing East to the West, which is ever-swiftly changing. The work I have to do keeps me, for most of the time, in Europe, and on the move. I am a pacifist and an internationalist. Yet I belong to no country in the West, but only to many people in the East. My skin, my religion, my taste in food, my way of thinking—all these make me differ profoundly from the people among whom I move.'

'. . . THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY . . .'

In 1931 the Aga Khan wrote an article about Happiness. He wrote in part: 'Firstly I would place spiritual happiness. Be at one with God. That is the fundamental question: are you in harmony with God? If you are—you are happy!

'Next I would place appreciation of enjoyment of the glories of Nature. Learn to appreciate the dawns and the sunsets. A very rich man can treasure the paintings he possesses, but every man can appreciate Nature and learn the happiness such appreciation brings.

'Pictures are very useful. If a man cannot go to the country, a picture will remind him of it. Then comes the happiness of poetry, the Voice of God speaking through the lips of man.

' Next I would put the happiness that comes from games such as golf, football and, so they tell me, cricket, but best of all is horse riding.

'Then there is the happiness of marriage and the happiness that comes from good health. One should keep the body clean, wear clean clothes, eat clean food, drink clear water, breathe clean air.'

This gospel of 'keeping fit' has been a fetish with the Aga Khan for about a quarter of a century. When he was near forty he began to suffer from goitre (this accounts for his very protuberant eyes). He asked himself: 'Am I going to die a young man or am I going to look after myself properly?' He gave himself the more satisfactory answer and went forthwith to Switzerland where he put himself under the best specialists. In later years he suffered from prostate trouble and once again decided to give himself the best treatment. The art of keeping fit, therefore, is all of a piece with his desire to overcome disease.

Twenty-five years ago the Aga Khan wrote an entertaining article on 'Keeping fit'. He wrote in part: 'As a child I did far too little exercise. I was brought up to ride well from the time I was about five and rode regularly until I was about sixteen or seventeen. . . . Then when I wanted to walk about a mile and a half,

I was completely exhausted. . . . Riding had left me soft in all muscles with the exception of those actually exercised.

'It was then I decided to improve my physique. I came in touch with the late Eugene Sandow, who gave me some excellent advice which I have never forgotten. Later I took up boxing. I know of no exercise so physically beneficial as a combination of French and English boxing methods.' (His Highness was, of course, referring to *la savate*, a French form of boxing with both hands and feet that passed out of use long before he wrote his article.)

'The French method is good for the digestive and internal muscles and the legs, and the British for the arms, back and shoulders.'

The Aga Khan was approaching the half century when he outlined his personal approach to the problem of how to live long. He said: 'At one time I used to have a sparring partner sent over to my rooms at the Ritz from the National Sporting Club. In the summer months I often used, very early, to put on a sweater, and go for a run through Green Park, up Constitution Hill, and back again before breakfast. If I am in France, I usually go to Aix-les-Bains, not for the waters, but to enjoy long walks in the mountains, which is a splendid exercise.'

His Highness's visits to Aix-les-Bains have already been noted, but also while in France His Highness carried on his 'physical jerks' and at one time used to travel about with his own physical culture instructor. When in London the Aga Khan never shaved himself; every day Mr. Charles Topper, the Court Hairdresser, went from his shop in Jermyn Street to the Ritz to shave him. Whether the Aga Khan was visiting in Ireland or staying at his Deauville villa, Topper had to go there to cut His Highness's hair. And once His Highness's fetish for keeping fit was brought home to Topper.

The Aga Khan was staying in Ireland with the late Sir Harry Greer. His Highness telegraphed to Topper to come and cut his hair. Topper arrived late in the evening and went to bed. The next

morning he was summoned to attend to his patron, when the following conversation occurred:

THE AGA KHAN: 'Good morning, Topper, did you sleep well?'

TOPPER: 'Thank you, Your Highness, very well.'

THE AGA KHAN: 'Did you have a good breakfast?'

TOPPER: 'Thank you, Your Highness, a very good breakfast.'

THE AGA KHAN: 'Were your bowels open?'

TOPPER: '!!???'

THE AGA KHAN: 'You'd better have some green figs.'

Every morning the Aga Khan eats green figs. Fortunately, much of his time is spent in countries where the green fig grows, but if he is not, geographically speaking, close to green figs, then the green figs must come to him, by plane if necessary. Yet the Aga Khan rarely mentions this appetite for green figs, but it is not a passion, although no doubt he likes green figs, but the demand for them is perhaps more connected with his Eastern than his Western life, for the Koran, the Moslem Bible which Mohammed claimed he received from the Angel Gabriel, recommends the eating of green figs.

Chapter Eighty-Five of the Koran opens with these words: 'By the fig and the olive, and by Mount Sinai, and this territory of security, verily we created man of a most excellent fabric.'

'God', say some commentators on the Koran, 'swears by these two fruits, because of their great uses and values; for the fig is wholesome and of easy digestion, and physically good to carry off phlegm, and gravel in the kidneys or bladder, and to remove obstructions of the liver and spleen, and also cures the gout and piles.'

The Aga Khan was a great golf and tennis enthusiast. A year or two ago his golf handicap was still twelve. He worked hard at his golf and at one time went around with his own private 'pro'. When he gave this up he seemed to prefer to play with 'pros' or alone.

When he played with a 'pro' he always said to him: I'll pay

you two guineas if I beat you and three guineas if you beat me.' His shrewdness telling him that he would get his extra guinea's worth from the 'pro' striving to earn that guinea and keeping his antagonist—himself—on top of his form.

Some years back the Aga Khan announced that he had two great ambitions, to win the Derby and win an Open Golf Handicap. Five times has he won the Derby, four times the full owner of the winner and once in partnership, but he never realised the other ambition.

The Aga Khan, about to cross the half century demarcation line, did not think golf and tennis sufficed. 'I find that neither of these games is adequate,' he wrote, 'nor is hunting.

'The majority are only able to indulge these sports once or twice a week, which is contrary to the body's requirements. The average English gentleman does practically nothing in the way of sport for five days a week and then indulges himself over the weekend. He is unquestionably wrong.

'He should, at least once a day, and oftener if he can, take some pleasurable and vigorous exercise. Unless he does so, his whole body becomes ungainly and horrible, which is the most ungrateful way of returning thanks to "God Who made us in His own image", for although I do not believe that we are actually made in the image of God, I believe that physical beauty has a spiritual value.

'Walking is a good exercise if it is not allowed to be merely a saunter through the streets. A good swinging pace of between four and five miles an hour is ideal. I do a good deal of walking, and usually cover about ten miles in two and a half hours. I think it is a very bad thing for one who is heavy to try to reduce his weight by any form of exercise or diet. Rather should he try to get hard and remain big instead of being merely soft and large. Softness is the enemy, not size.

'I have a very strong aversion from colours when exercising. Coloured socks, coloured trousers, or underclothes are, I think,

unhealthy, and I am against the wearing of tweeds for the same reason. White cotton, white drill, white shoes seem cooler; flannel or serges or woollens that are porous are to be preferred.

'I am always unpopular at the hotels at which I stay because I am usually up before the servants, although I go to bed later than most. Too much sleep dulls the brain and also precludes taking full advantage of many of the beauties of nature. In my many crossings over to the Continent and world travels I usually try to travel by night so that I may enjoy the dawn as it breaks on the sea or on different landscapes.'

Until the last War the Aga Khan did indeed mostly travel as he relates, but during the post War years he has taken to the air, for long and short journeys. Of those other days he wrote:

'Unfortunately, in summer-time it is not practical politics to be up before sunrise every morning, though in winter I always see the dawn, usually from some spot in the East or on the high seas, and sometimes on the Riviera.

'Five or six hours of regular sleep and a ten minute nap after lunch or in a motor-car when being driven are quite enough for most of us.'

For most of us, perhaps, but certainly not for His Highness himself. Maybe the ten minutes sufficed when he was quite a young man, but certainly when he was just over fifty he would get up from the lunch table, go to his bedroom, take off all his clothes and go to bed for two hours. Once at Deauville I asked him if this really did him good and he answered: 'They tell me that Harold Rothermere [the first Lord Rothermere] spends a whole day in bed every week.'

With regard to diet, the Aga Khan wrote: 'I believe that we eat too much, and for this reason I think we should all drop one or two meals a week, which is my own practice. That means that on three days a week I take only one solid meal.'

Ah, but how solid! His Highness's idea of 'a little lunch' usually

ran to about nine courses, and what delicious food. The Aga Khan is a *gourmet*. Once he was motoring in France and he arrived at mid-day in a small place where he had never previously been, and where he was not known at all. He entered a small restaurant. The proprietor came towards him, smiled and said: 'I'd like to cook you a nice lunch!' He looks that sort of man.

One can do the Aga Khan no greater personal favour than to recommend him to some good *bôite* one has discovered. It makes no difference to him if the place is ultra smart or whether it is a *bistro* where the locals resort. Provided the food is good, that is all he asks. He neither smokes nor drinks hard liquor such as cocktails, only wine. Once in London he had a bad cold he could not shake off. Somebody told him to take a little whisky. How much should he take? A tablespoonful, he was told. He fussed and fumed over that whisky, fearing the effect it might have on him, and standing over the now nervous server like a High Priest ordaining a novice. 'Will you have tea with me or a whisky and soda alone?' has been an afternoon greeting to his biographer over the years.

With regard to his ruling on missing meals, one can but remark that those who have been bidden to lunch with the Aga Khan, and bidden, too, on the spur of the moment, must always have had the extraordinary good fortune to arrive on a day when His Highness was merely providing one of those little lunches of many courses.

Continuing on the subject of dieting, the Aga Khan wrote: 'I think that this [missing one or two meals a week] is more natural and simpler, and much less boring than some of the elaborate *régimes* that have been worked out by others. On ordinary days I have fruit and coffee for breakfast, and later take a big lunch. At tea time I take tea only, and no solids. It is my custom at dinner to take a meal that is much smaller than my lunch.'

That is quite true. Unless it is a dinner party, there are seldom

more than seven courses at dinner. But His Highness does not mention those goodly portions of ice cream, made with fresh cream, of which he is very, very fond. Once when I was saying goodbye to him when about to start on a trans-Continental journey, he impressed on me the advisability of not eating a meal in the train at night. 'One cannot digest it,' he said.

'I have no fads and few special fancies', writes the Aga Khan, momentarily forgetting his fondness for boiled turbot and caper sauce. 'I accept what is put before me, and the better the food, the more I enjoy it. What a person enjoys is, in my opinion, good for him.' Mr. Maurice Webb, when Minister of Food, paraphrased that very remark.

'Colour, which is to be avoided in clothing for exercise, is a stimulant in food. A beautiful apple or peach becomes tempting because of its colouring, and seems more enjoyable. Fruits are adequate for breakfast; I will not admit even a piece of bread to my table for this meal.' The comment that occurs on this stricture is: '*il y avait une fois. . . .*'

'Travelling about the world', wrote the Aga Khan, 'I have always been interested in observing the physique of different peoples. I have noticed that the French seem to have improved enormously during the past thirty years. That cannot be due to the army, because military service was already in existence, but must have come from the practice of sport before and after military service. Football may have helped considerably. I know of no class of men in the world so magnificent as the officers of the British Army, especially those of the old army, which I am sorry to say, has almost disappeared.

'I think that physically English women look healthier and fitter than all other women. In England women shop assistants conform to the Shop Hours Act and do not work so long as in other countries, where women manage the businesses and the men spend so much time in the cafés, bazaars, theatres, etc.'

The Aga Khan could write a good deal more about Women in general. Any man who has had four wives could, of course, but the Aga Khan is more observant than most. Besides, he has almost a Latin understanding of Women. Like a Latin, he craves the society of Women and feels he must spend a certain amount of time every day in their company. Women know this and react to it. They appreciate his interest in their dresses, perfume and jewellery, and, as will be shown, the Aga Khan can, when the occasion arises, or when he causes it to arise, act as a veritable Caliph of legend. But the little the Aga Khan has written about Women is concerned only with Indian women.

Writing about the 'Modern Girl in India', the Aga Khan said in part: 'I am trying to guide our young women's lives into entirely new channels. I would like to transplant three attributes from your genus 'Modern Woman' to those in India. These are her anxiety to improve her mind, her general keenness for self-development, and her wide interests. With that end in mind, I am trying to guide our young women's lives into entirely new channels.

'I want to see them able to earn their living in trades and professions, so that they are not economically dependent on marriage, nor a burden on their fathers and brothers.

'Establishing girls' schools in most of the towns was my first step towards this. The result has been a modern outlook on social questions. Now Indian parents can no longer arrange betrothals and weddings against their daughters' wishes.

'Although the Mohammedans never had child marriage, it exists among the Hindus—our girls no longer marry at fourteen, but wait until they are eighteen or nineteen. Dowries do not determine a match, but many young men still expect them. Marriage settlements depend on the bride's social position, and usually consist of her trousseau or household goods and furniture.

'The next step is to achieve a new system of economic

independence so they can marry whomsoever they like and whenever they like. Hitherto, a girl had to marry early to ensure her existence, transforming matrimony into some form of a permanent lunch-card. Now self-support will tend to level class difficulties. Women equipped with means of earning a livelihood need fear nothing. Widows will no longer be burdens on society.

'The real effect, I believe, will be happier women! For permitting both parties to contribute earnings to the household will remove the economic pressure of poverty, and then middle-class family life will certainly improve.'

The Aga Khan's writings consist of an excellent book, *India in Transition*, which he dedicated to his mother; there is also a published collection of ten speeches on politics and religion.

In early middle age the Aga Khan wrote several articles for the British popular press, but in later years he has confined his writings to *The Times* and has appeared on many occasions on the leader page. Cheques in payment, one may say, were not large, but His Highness's joy and almost unbelievable pleasure when he received them could not have been surpassed by a professional writer receiving ten times as much.

When there was a Persian Art Exhibition in London a few years ago, the Aga Khan insisted that he knew more about Persian Art than *The Times* Art Critic possibly could, so he obviously was the man to do the job. He convinced the then Editor of *The Times* and turned out some very interesting and professional criticism. This amazing man is also an authority on Persian poetry and used to have long arguments with the late Sir Kennard Coleridge, himself a British authority on the subject.

His Highness has also had quite some correspondence in *The Times* on the subject of Omar Kyam and his poetry. The Aga Khan affirmed that the famous Persian poet was 'a hopeless waster'; Omar Kyam is quite obviously one of the few Persians of whom the Gentleman from Persia has no high opinion.

And he isn't going to fight for you—he means to fight for Us.
Oder ja, Uncle Bill, oder ja.
And he doesn't want a billet such as fits his high degree
As the chief of a battalion or a corps of infantry,
But he comes a simple private, just like Tommy A. and me,
Wunderbar, Uncle Bill, wunderbar!
When the proudest prince of India lays aside his pomp and might,
Doffs his rank and sheds his titles to join us in the fight,
You can bet your final twenty marks our cause is pretty right.
Gott sei Dank, Uncle Bill, Gott sei Dank.

But alas, as His Highness would say, the War Office did not accept his offer to fight. His Highness made another statement, this time in Britain, when he was saying goodbye to a section of the Indian Field Ambulance Corps that was going to the Front in France. 'One small and humble personal explanation: If I do not get anything of a combatant nature, I hope to come with you as your interpreter, if I may. [Cheers] I know English, French, German and Hindustani, and I do not think you will find many interpreters so useful; so that I will earn my bread, if I can, there. If I do not go, it will be because of some *force majeure*, and not through any effort on my own part.' But Fate ruled that the Aga Khan should not go to the Front, even as interpreter.

Two alternative reasons for him not going to the Front either as a combatant or non-combatant have been given and it is probable that both reasons are correct. Writing in a Foreword to his book *India in Transition*, the Aga Khan stated in May, 1918: '. . . when I was debarred on medical grounds from Army service in the Allied cause it confirmed me in my intention to return to India last winter [1917]. I cherished the hope that I might be of some small service to my country in helping to shape some of the representations which might be made.' (This refers to Mr. Montagu's visit to India in connection with self-

government for India.) The Aga Khan then refers to 'a painful malady requiring surgical treatment in Europe and fully six months of rest and retirement in a prescribed climate'.

Writing in a book published after the War, in Bombay, the late Mr. Dumasia, a Parsee journalist, states the reason why Lord Kitchener did not allow the Aga Khan to go to the Front was that he had more important work for him to do. The nature of this very secret work is discussed elsewhere, but one wonders whether the fact that the Aga Khan was to be seen in the Ritz Hotel, Paris, very frequently during the War did not provide the genesis of the many allegations of his ultra-enjoyment of life. It is quite possible that this apparent light-heartedness was a well-constructed *façade* to screen the work on which he was really engaged. It is also possible that certain stories concerning the Aga Khan were circulated by enemies who posed as friends.

There were times, of course, when Britain did appear to some people to be in a poor situation, but publicly the Aga Khan was staunch in his opinion that Britain would win. It is equally true, of course, that after Germany was apparently defeated and the Treaty of Versailles signed, the Aga Khan opined that it was a bad Treaty and that in twenty years Germany would be back on her feet again.

While the Aga Khan was away from India during the War his mother, Lady Ali Shah, was tremendously active in his stead. Reference has already been made to her ability for organisation; she now developed this to the fullest extent by adding to her work of keeping in touch with the *jamat*, and seeing that tributes were paid regularly. She was also sending out instructions and receiving hundreds of visits, while stirring up the usually apathetic Moslem women to a standard of activity hitherto unknown to them. She directed this newly-won activity into War work for Britain. As a token of the esteem of King George V, Lady Ali Shah was made a member of the Order of the Crown of India.

The arrival of Indian troops in France, many of them Moslems, was hailed with delight by Britain and her Allies, but the first winter in France proved their undoing and there was considerable discontent among them. Lord Roberts went to France to visit them and died there. The Aga Khan quietly did his best to quieten the men's resentfulness, but soon they had to be withdrawn. There were no grave cases of open mutiny, but there were a number of cases of self-inflicted wounds for the purpose of being sent to the Indian Army Base at Marseilles. When fighting began in the Dardanelles there was a new outlet for the services of the Indian Army, but here once more there were further anxieties for the Aga Khan.

For the first time in centuries men of the Moslem faith were fighting other men of the same faith. What would the reaction be among the Moslems serving in the Indian Army?

The Aga Khan was interviewed in Paris by an American representative, Mr. Henry Wales, of the *Daily Express*. His Highness said that there was no reason to fear any trouble. His forecast was correct, but he did not say anything about his worries which were concerned with Islam as a whole.

For nearly five years and almost without a break, Turkey had been involved in battles with Christian forces. She had won the first war against Greece, but she had been defeated by Italy, with the connivance of the Concert of the Powers, then by the Balkan League. Now her chances of ultimate survival were indeed scanty. If Germany won the War, then Turkey would become a vassal of Germany, and the Turkish Empire would be but a corridor for the German *Drang nach Osten*. But, if Germany went down in defeat, what then was to become of the Turkish Empire?

In Arabia the legendary Lawrence was handing out bags of British sovereigns to the Sheiks, inciting them to revolt against the Turks. The whole of Islam was quivering. The Aga Khan

had to be loyal to his Faith and loyal to the British Empire with which his personal fortune and the fortune and fate of his scattered millions of followers were likewise bound up.

Although still an unknown man to the public in Europe, he was now marching quickly towards great fame and the zenith of an extraordinary career. His opposite number in the Moslem world, the Sultan of Turkey, Caliph of the Sunni Moslems, was virtually a prisoner in his Palace on the Bosphorus, hemmed in by the Germans and threatened by the Allies.

The Aga Khan may have felt the weight of his tremendous responsibilities, but he did not show it. Outwardly at least, he was the *débonnaire* personage whose face and figure were shortly to be known to the world as an owner of Derby winners.

The other face he kept hidden from the world.

CHAPTER IX

AGA KHAN: SECRET AGENT

THE AGA KHAN has never kept a diary, but his memory is a good one and he relies on it. Yet there are times when one could wish for greater precision, although in most cases, even where his association with historic events lacks this wished-for precision, there are usually means of cross-checking. Sometimes, unfortunately, His Highness's references lead to very secret circles beyond which penetration is forbidden. Such a case is that of Dost Mohammed Khan.

His Highness places the period of his first secret service as being during the time when Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India. The Aga Khan affirms that war with Russia was feared and that the British authorities found it difficult to obtain reliable information concerning 'a formidable refugee in Central Asia'. The name of this person was Dost Mohammed Khan. His Highness, through his followers in Central Asia, obtained the wanted information. The information, says the Aga Khan, showed there was no fear of immediate attack by Russia.

This somewhat bald statement, although His Highness claims evidence supporting it is to be found in the archives of the British Intelligence Service and in confidential reports from General Mullaley and General Malleson, needs some clarification. It is obvious that neither the files of the British Intelligence Service nor the confidential reports of the two Generals are open to investigation. Fortunately there are other clues.

Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905. Nicolas II was Czar of Russia during that period. In 1899 the Czar convoked the abortive Hague Peace Conference. The outbreak of the Boer War followed; then came the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was much disliked in St. Petersburg and Paris.

In 1904 the Russo-Japanese War began. There were a series of Russian defeats. The Russian Baltic Fleet, sailing for Eastern waters, fired on and sank some Hull trawlers in the North Sea. The Russians affirmed that Japanese destroyers were among the trawlers. The British Cabinet ordered Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, commanding the British Mediterranean Fleet, to take his ships to Vigo, Spain, and stop the Russian ships leaving European waters until compensation had been paid for the loss of life and damage caused.

Tension between Britain and Russia was high and there might have been war, but Britain's strong stand caused Russia's ally, France, to intervene with a suggestion for a neutral inquiry in Paris. Both Russia and Britain accepted, so Russia was able to be white-washed, though she had to pay an indemnity.

No official papers published give any hint as to the feared attack on India, but it is of general knowledge that, for at least half a century, Britain did continuously fear such a Russian attack. It is obvious that the extreme tension of 1904 brought a high-water mark in those fears.

The Aga Khan has at various times called attention to the work he has done for Britain among his followers on the North-West Frontier of India and reference to this work has already been made in this book, but the 1904 secret service work speaks of 'Central Asia', a loose geographical expression, but obviously covering territory beyond the North-West Frontier, most probably on the borders of Afghanistan. It may be wondered how the Aga Khan was able to obtain his information. The explanation is simple enough.

Among the Aga Khan's followers are minor kings in Central Asia and even Moslem citizens of the Soviet Union; in 1904, when there was not yet a Soviet Union, the Little Father of Russia—whom the Aga Khan had visited—ruled over the same Moslem families. They were Russian subjects but not members,

of course, of the Russian Orthodox Church, through which the Czars obtained much of their despotic power. Among the Czar's Moslem subjects the word of the Aga Khan was law, so at the age of twenty-seven he was able to obtain from his followers in an alien land information denied to the British Intelligence Service.

As long as the British Raj ruled in India, the secret services of the Aga Khan were in constant demand, but it had nearly always been in connection with Afghanistan and other parts of the North-West Frontier. He himself refers to such services, not as secret service, but as 'secret diplomatic missions'. There is certainly no doubt at all as to the diplomacy that had to be used, but all these missions were very costly. It is a proud boast of the Aga Khan that he has always borne the whole cost of them himself.

It was in 1913 that the Aga Khan was requested to undertake a very delicate and secret diplomatic mission to Cairo. The Khedive of Egypt was under grave suspicion. The European situation was deteriorating rapidly and it was of vital importance to know whether it would be possible to count on the loyalty of the Khedive, who was suspected of having developed very close relations with Germany.

The Aga Khan's mission produced evidence that the Khedive was prepared, in the event of War, to support Germany.

Sustained by the Aga Khan's evidence, the British Government decided on a master stroke. The Khedive was invited to pay an official visit to London. He accepted, and journeyed as far as Paris. But he left the Champs Élysées hotel at which he was staying and disappeared on the eve of his scheduled departure for London. He was traced to the Hotel Palais d'Orsay where he was living under an assumed name, with a woman.

The Khedive returned to Cairo. The Aga Khan's information was fully corroborated. Very soon after the outbreak of the 1914 War it became evident that the Khedive would hinder the defence

of the Suez Canal. With Turkey about to enter the War on the side of the Central Powers, a crisis developed very quickly. The services of the Aga Khan were now required once again and he was confronted with a mission more delicate than any he had yet undertaken. Both the Turks and the Egyptians are Moslem peoples and their religious differences with the Aga Khan's 'spiritual children', as he calls his Ismailis, did not make them proscribed enemies. Moreover, for several years the Aga Khan had done all he could to protect Turkish interests. With his eventual secret relations with Turkey I shall deal a little later. Now, on the outbreak of War, he tried to persuade the Sultan not to go to War, but the Sultan, younger brother of the abdicated Abdul Hamid, was too much in the hands of the German controlled Turkish Generals for the Aga Khan's advice to have any effect. With the Khedive of Egypt it was another story entirely.

The Khedive hated the British but he loved money. He was a rich man, but like many rich men, he never minded becoming a little richer. In his negotiations with the Khedive, the Aga Khan did not lose sight of the money motive. But the Khedive did not want to go. Ultimately, he yielded to force—plus a financial settlement. The financial side of the business negotiated by the Aga Khan was that the ex-Khedive was to receive from the British Government £30,000 a year for life, exempted from British Income Tax.

Like many another monarch, the ex-Khedive had deposited large funds in Switzerland and that is where he went when he abdicated and left Cairo. But in Switzerland he began his intrigues all over again. The Aga Khan was forced to undertake several wartime trips to Lausanne. The ex-Khedive, it may be remembered, was the man who engaged the services of the Frenchman known as Bolo Pasha, who was tried for treason and shot at Vincennes. But the money the British Government promised continued to be paid right through the first War, the

years between the Wars and right through the second War, down to the time of the ex-Khedive's death a few years ago. He must have drawn very nearly £900,000 from British taxpayers.

With the entry of Turkey into the War and the extension of the conflict to the Middle East, the Aga Khan's work was multiplied. On the one hand he had to quieten the Ismailis, who were upset by reports of heavy Turkish losses. This he did by pointing out to the millions who lived under the rule of the British Raj that it was not the British who had attacked the Turks, but the Turks who were attacking the British, the traditional protector of the Ismailis. This policy was successful, but on the other hand he had to help the British in other directions by working very skilfully as their secret agent.

This time his services were required behind the Turkish lines in Mesopotamia and Persia. The Aga Khan used members of his own family as sub-agents. Many cousins were pressed into his services and sent on missions, always delicate and sometimes dangerous, to try and discover Turkish plans. There were no sudden and dramatic successes, but by virtue of long and patient enquiries, sufficient items of information were pieced together and handed over to General Allenby's Intelligence Service.

The activities of the Aga Khan did not escape the notice of the Germans and they tried to kill him. These attempts took place in Switzerland, where the Aga Khan centralised his sources of information. In Zurich, when he was there in the middle of the first World War, the Swiss police discovered a plot to assassinate him with a bomb. Three men were arrested. Some months later, when the Aga Khan was on another mission to Switzerland and had taken his wife, the Begum Theresa, with him, the police discovered a plot to poison them both. On this occasion no arrests were made, and the Swiss police did their best to discourage the Aga Khan's political activities there.

Now that the Germans were very much aware of the active

part the Aga Khan was playing in the War, it is probable that the British Government came to the conclusion that there could be no harm in publicly recognising his services. In 1916 it was decided to give him the status of an Indian Ruling Prince for life, and a salute of eleven guns. But the aftermath was bitter.

Right through the first War the services of the Aga Khan were in demand, and at the end of War he had to play the role of peacemaker between Britain and Turkey and prevent the outbreak of a second Anglo-Turkish conflict.

During the War he had spent most of his time in Europe; he had had few occasions to visit his mother in India, who had ordered the Ismailis to pray for victory, or to visit his followers. He had nobody but his mother to replace him, as far as it was possible for her to do so. His son Ali was but a small child, whom his father rarely had time to see, and now, at the end of the War, he was unable to 'demobilise' himself and resume his work among his followers because of the sudden appearance on the European scene of a strange figure called Mustapha Kemal. His arrival came at a very awkward moment for His Highness, who was having some trouble with an anti-British Indian Moslem named Marilana Mohammed Ali. The Turkish situation quickly turned dangerously against Britain, whose Government looked to the Aga Khan as the one man who could alleviate it.

The Treaty of Sèvres, which was supposed to make peace with Turkey, contained very harsh terms, inspired mainly by Mr. Lloyd George. It was later acknowledged that the terms were vindictive. The Aga Khan felt very badly about this. True he had risked personal popularity among his followers as far back as the Greco-Turkish War and the two Balkan Wars, and even when Turkey entered the Great War, because he had never made the Moslem cause his own and had counselled moderation to the Ismailis. But now he felt that Turkey was being badly and unfairly treated, and he was heard to say that he was prepared to

put all his own resources at the service of the defeated Turks to obtain justice for them. Events were marching very quickly, however.

Encouraged by Mr. Lloyd George, the Greeks attacked the Turks and stated their intention to march to Constantinople. The threat came from the new Army of Turks under the leadership of the 'Grey Wolf', Mustapha Kemal, an insurgent army that defied the Sultan and refused to recognise the Treaty of Peace. The New Turks routed the Greeks. Smyrna was in flames. The Turks were drunk with success, and their leader Mustapha Kemal was drunk, ordinarily drunk, as he so often was. The Turks talked of throwing out the Army of Occupation. This Army was mostly British; there were token French and Italian forces, but they had deserted the British cause, and Premier Poincaré, behind the backs of the British, had signed a separate and secret Treaty with Mustapha Kemal. In Constantinople, as I well remember, tension was rising. The Turks tried to demonstrate outside the British Embassy, and British subjects were insulted. The British and Turkish forces faced one another across a narrow No Man's Land at Chanak. Then the Aga Khan, with the courageous assistance of Lord Beaverbrook, saved the situation.

Lord Beaverbrook went to Turkey hoping to have a personal meeting with Mustapha Kemal, to be arranged by the Aga Khan, but the burning of Smyrna prevented the meeting. Lord Beaverbrook returned to London where he told the late Bonar Law: 'Lloyd George, Birkenhead and Winston, those men mean war.' Bonar Law wrote the famous letter to *The Times* that brought about the collapse of the Coalition Government, while the Aga Khan promised Mustapha Kemal that he would use what influence he had to mitigate the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres. In fact he had been doing so with the London Conference which was dealing with the subject when the Greeks launched their attack.

He also assured Mustapha Kemal on behalf of the British Government that he was authorised to affirm that if he would stay his hand he could assure him that, pending some provisional settlement, the strategic position of the Turks should not be prejudiced by abstention from any hostile action. This was agreed, the tension lessened and there followed the Mudania Agreement. A little later came the next piece of secret service work. It was probably the last important work the Aga Khan undertook, but it ended in a fiasco.

During the War the secret work of the Aga Khan had caused various uprisings within the Turkish Empire. British help had been given to the insurgents. One result of this action was some latent opposition to the Sultan-Caliph, now Mohammed VI Vahidud-Din, who ascended the Throne on July 3rd, 1918. The end of the War saw Turkey pretty well divided on the question of the Caliphate; one half supporting the Sultan and the other half the drunken, brawling, completely irreligious Mustapha Kemal. It was obvious that the Aga Khan could not support or tolerate Mustapha Kemal. For different reasons the British Government of the day did not wish to do so either.

Mr. H. C. Armstrong, biographer of Mustapha Kemal, wrote: 'Once more Chance came to help him [Mustapha Kemal], once more England supplied him with a weapon. Someone persuaded the Aga Khan and a certain Amir Ali, two Indian Sunni Moslems, to write a letter of protest on behalf of the Moslems of India, demanding that the dignity of the Caliph be respected. This letter was sent to the Constantinople press and published before it reached the Government in Angora.'

Now, saying that the Aga Khan is 'an Indian Sunni Moslem' is like saying that the Archbishop of Canterbury is a Roman Catholic. One can but hope that the remainder of Mr. Armstrong's allegations are more accurate. He quotes Mustapha Kemal as saying: 'He [the Aga Khan] is a special agent of the English.'

That part is quite true, but what really happened was as follows.

The letter of protest, written, one does not know why, in English, was sent to Ankara, the capital of Mustapha Kemal. A week later, the same protest, still in English, was circulated among the Constantinople newspapers—and published.

Mustapha Kemal made an impassioned speech before the National Assembly. The deputies went wild. They cursed the *hojas* (priests) and the Caliphate and the Caliph. From that moment on, Mustapha Kemal was safe. But the action of the Aga Khan, whether by accident or design, put an end to the Caliphate. The letter which gave rise to so much trouble was a lengthy document, but was moderate and conciliatory in tone, yet the authors, purposely or not, made three mistakes. There was no need to write the letter in English, this was considered to be offensive. The authors waited but a week for a reply before informing the Press, and as Orientals themselves, they must have known that a week in the East—even the Near East—is but a day in the Western World. Thirdly, when the letter was circulated among the Turkish editors, it was apparently intended as background information only, but nothing was said about that. The evidence being as it is, most unbiased observers would, one imagines, opine that the purpose of the letter was to try and bring discredit on Mustapha Kemal, on religious grounds, and to unite Turkey against him.

After the outburst in the National Assembly, feeling rose against the Sultan-Caliph. At the beginning of November, 1922, the Sultanate was abolished. Early one Saturday morning a fortnight later, the late Sir Nevile Henderson telephoned to Mr. Max Macartney, of *The Times*, and myself, asking us to call at the British Embassy at 12.30. Sir Nevile received us standing with his legs outstretched in front of his study fire. On the mantelpiece behind him was a marble clock at which he kept glancing over his shoulder, while he made polite conversation. The clock struck

one. Sir Nevile said: '*Malaya* must have cleared the Straits now. I think it is safe to tell you what has happened. The Sultan has gone away. We took him off at dawn this morning.'

A British Red Cross van had smuggled the Sultan out of his Palace that morning. He had taken his favourite wife, a Circassian, her son and a quantity of jewellery wrapped up in old newspapers. The ex-Sultan and his party had embarked in *Malaya* and had gone to Malta.

That was the first fruit of the Aga Khan's *gaffe*, or calculated indiscretion, whichever it was. But worse was to come.

The Sultan's brother, Abdul Mejd, was made Caliph. The ceremony took place, also on a Saturday morning, and was singularly unimpressive, a portent of what was so soon to follow.

There was a tacit decision to scrap the Treaty of Sèvres, and a Conference was arranged at Lausanne between Mustapha Kemal's representatives and British, French and Italian delegates. The Conference broke up without any useful decisions having been reached, but some six months later there was another meeting at Lausanne, which the Aga Khan attended in person, and he achieved a great personal triumph. In the West his prestige and reputation was higher than it had ever been. It was in the East that his star had declined, because of his unfortunate intervention in the question of the Caliphate.

To Lausanne he came as the representative of the Indian Moslems, with the backing of the Viceroy of India. The Turks were highly suspicious, not only of the Aga Khan but also of the chief British Delegate, the late Lord Curzon, whose cold and very frigid manner contrasted oddly with the benign joviality of the Aga Khan. Gradually the common-sense and shrewdness of the Aga Khan won the confidence of the Turks, who swallowed a pill less bitter, perhaps, than the one made at Sèvres, but, nevertheless, bitter. The Treaty of Lausanne was signed and

the Aga Khan sent a message to the whole Moslem world, telling it that for the first time in Moslem history they had discussed a Treaty on terms of equality.

But eight months later, in March, 1924, Mustapha Kemal abolished the Caliphate, and never has it been revived, although from time to time there have been rumours that it would be revived.

The Aga Khan has always made it a practice to attend the nuptials of Moslem monarchs. He was present in Teheran at both the weddings of the Shah of Persia, and he went to Cairo to attend the two weddings of King Farouk. At the time of the Egyptian King's first wedding, it is understood that there was some discussion concerning King Farouk claiming the Caliphate, but nothing came of it. There was some confirmation of King Farouk's earlier intention, in May, 1952, when it was announced in Cairo that, after close research, it had been discovered that the King, like the Aga Khan, was a descendant of Mohammed, through his mother, who is a descendant of Hussein, a son of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet. Some people close to the Throne wondered whether King Farouk would demand the handing over to him of the mantle and the hairs of the beard of the Prophet, which still repose in a glass case in the Stamboul Museum.

The far-reaching effects of the Aga Khan's last piece of spectacular secret service went on for years, rippling like circles on a pond into which a stone has been thrown. Both in the East and West, however, there were attempts to salve his prestige.

In Britain, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Supplement to the 11th Edition, Vol. 30, page 70) said: 'His [Aga Khan's] immediate followers provided a solid phalanx of whole-hearted support of Britain, which had a steadying influence in sterilising the efforts of impatient headstrong elements.' It goes on to refer to 'secret missions of great importance in Egypt, Switzerland and

elsewhere entrusted to His Highness'. Reference is also made to what he did after the Armistice, as related in this chapter.

In February, 1924, the Upper Chamber of India (the Council of State) passed a resolution recommending the Governor-General in Council to convey to the Norwegian Parliament the view that the Aga Khan 'is a fit and proper person to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace'.

But it is doubtful whether the Aga Khan ever forgave Mustapha Kemal.

When, on the eve of the festivities to mark the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic, I was leaving for Ankara, I asked His Highness what he really thought of Mustapha Kemal. The Aga Khan, who can be very Rabelaisian at times, answered: 'He does three things too much that no man must do too much', and he proceeded to enumerate and label them. Mustapha Kemal consumed too much alcoholic liquor and indulged too much in vices, natural and un-natural, but His Highness called a spade a spade.

In May, 1926, there occurred another crisis in Anglo-Russian relations and once again the North-West Frontier of India was the cause of it. British plans for the regrouping of British forces on the Frontier were stolen. The plans were reported to be in a safe in Arcos House, London, the headquarters of the Russian Trade Commission. Special Branch detectives raided Arcos House and forced the door of the safe. The plans were not found. Angry protests from Moscow led to the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia. The details of the mystery of the Frontier plans have never been made public, but the British Government, with the assistance of the Aga Khan, was watching Afghanistan closely.

The Aga Khan's own secret service organisation had kept the British authorities fully informed as to the Russian agents' activities in Cabul, King Amanullah's capital, so when the King

and his Queen started out on their journey to Europe, the British Government was well briefed, but the wily Amanullah knew perfectly well how much importance both London and Moscow applied to his person and determined to profit by it. He had plenty of money of his own and moved a great deal of it to Europe, to Switzerland and Italy. But for his part, he was determined that he would spend as little as possible. The Royal couple broke their journey in Cairo, where they stayed at Shepheard's Hotel. The King visited the hotel's barber shop and was delighted with it. He tried something of everything and ran up a large bill, which was presented to him as he was leaving. He looked at it, snapped his fingers, exclaimed: 'British Government pays', and walked out.

The French fêted him in Paris where the details of the Royal couple's visit to Britain were announced. The Prince of Wales was to meet them at Dover; there were to be military and naval reviews; they were to stay at Buckingham Palace. Then the visit was mysteriously postponed, twice. The reason was that the Southern Railway was trying to get King Amanullah to pay the cost of a special train from Paris to Calais. The King refused to pay. In the end, the British Government had to pay.

The Royal party spent the night at Calais Maritime Station Hotel. When the party came in to dinner, the King asked Major Dodds, the British Military Attaché at Cabul, who was accompanying the King: 'Who is supposed to pay for those flowers on the table?'

But the visit to Britain passed off according to plan. Then the Royal party left—for Moscow!

On his return to his capital the King lost his throne and went to live in exile in Rome.

CHAPTER X

'ISMAIL'S PENCE'

MANY PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY rich people, are very interested in other people's money and how they made it. The Aga Khan himself is no exception. Another wealthy man, the late Lord Rothermere, once wanted to know how much money there was to be made out of writing and publishing biographies. The Aga Khan was once very interested to know how much money Lord Rothermere, who he said was one of the three richest men in England, made out of newspapers. But the Aga Khan also wanted to know how much his autobiography would be worth to him, a curious question to come from a man who is one of the richest men in the world. He estimated that his autobiography should be worth between 'seven and eight thousand pounds'. That was in November, 1936.

A London Sunday newspaper had offered him two thousand guineas to sign six articles it said need not be written by him personally. He was first of all agreeable to the offer, then changed his mind. A conversation took place in his home, at that time the Villa Jeanne-Andrée on Cap d'Antibes. He had wished his son, Ali Khan, to write his biography, but his son did not do so. When asked why, the Aga Khan replied with extreme frankness: 'Because my son is a bloody fool.'

The Aga Khan then proceeded to discuss his reason for the value he placed on his autobiography. 'Look,' he said, 'supposing Max [Lord Beaverbrook] dies, which God forbid, think of the things I could tell about Max.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'but supposing you die first, which God forbid, think of the things Max would write about you—and you wouldn't get a penny.'

No doubt there are few men in the world whose income is so

big and so mysterious as that of His Highness the Aga Khan. Equally surely nobody has had so many fanciful stories told about his income.

The annual income of the Aga Khan was estimated at twelve million pounds a year. His income, whatever the total is, is derived from two distinct sources. The first source is the money which comes directly from his followers. The second source is the money the Aga Khan makes through his shrewdness as a financier, by clever investment and successful speculation. But unfortunately, it is difficult to disabuse people's minds of the more romantic stories told about the manner in which the Aga Khan collects the tributes paid to him. There are absurd stories that the water in which he performs his ablutions is bottled and sold at a tremendous price. It is, of course, quite possible that some unscrupulous people do sell water for which they make untrue claims, and it is correct, of course, that there are fanatics among his followers who would pay unbelievable sums for a sip of the water in which the Aga Khan has dipped his fingers when blessing some of his followers, or 'naming' (the equivalent of baptising) their children, but this could not and most certainly does not form the smallest fraction of the huge sums of money that pour into his coffers every day of the year. Before detailing the method of collection, the penalties for abstention, or telling of the duties the Aga Khan is supposed to perform, it may help to obtain a clear picture of the facts if one gives a rough estimate of his gross income received from his followers.

As already told, the Aga Khan believes he has approximately twenty million followers, whereas Sir Frank Brown, who was for so many years his political adviser, estimates the figure at only half His Highness's figure. For the purpose of reaching a fair average of his income from his followers one might take the lesser figure of ten million. Among those people are some extremely rich and some miserably poor. One may disregard for

the moment the monies raised on the occasions of His Highness's Diamond and Golden Jubilees and concentrate solely on the ordinary tributes. The very poor give perhaps copper annas, but the rich and the very rich give large cheques, sometimes for as much as £1,000. But if ten million people each pay a yearly tribute of five shillings only, one sees at once that here already are fifty million shillings, and fifty million shillings amount to two and a half million pounds. So, if quite reasonably one multiplies either the number of followers, bringing the figure nearer to His Highness's own estimate, or alternatively increases the estimate of the yearly personal tribute, which one has every right to do, the total reached is colossal, even without taking into account the income received under other headings.

With regard to the tributes, the Koran adjures Moslems to contribute two-and-a-half per cent of their incomes, called Zakat, for the benefit of the poor and wayfarers; this is paid to their Imam. Among the Aga Khan's followers are those known as 'Dasoondi'. These give him one tenth of the value of their properties every year, or one tenth of their total incomes.

Then there are the 'Petandiafs' who pay large fees on special occasions and make these sacrifices periodically, such as when a male child is born to them or on other happy occasions.

Highest merit for gifts goes to those called 'Sarbandias'. These fanatics literally ruin themselves. When the 'Sarbandias' make the sacrifice, they turn themselves and their families out of their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The homes, furniture and so forth are sold and the money given to the priests who collect for the Aga Khan. Then the clothes the 'Sarbandias' are wearing are valued and the value is debited to the 'Sarbandias' and goes in with the rest of the money. These forms of collective gifts come in all the time, a stream of money, gold and precious metals that flows on and on until it ultimately reaches Bombay. But this is by no means the whole of the story. There are many

special occasions when sums of money are raised. These again can be divided into different sections. Practically every time there is a gathering of Khojas, the richest of the Aga Khan's followers who are becoming richer and richer because they are clever traders, there is some form of collection. It may be a banquet in London or in Pretoria, South Africa, where there are many wealthy Khojas. The guests will leave a certain amount of money behind them, not for the waiters but for their Imam. They have great mental satisfaction, they say, in doing so. The Aga Khan is himself no mean collector of funds; that is one of the grievances of the Reform Party. The Party claims that once the Aga Khan collected 20,000 rupees in Karachi, which they say represented 50 per cent of his followers' incomes, instead of the Koran-prescribed two-and-a-half per cent. The Party also claims that when in 1920 the Aga Khan visited Karachi he 'carried away 15 lakhs of rupees after a stay of only 26 days'. Moreover, the Party alleges that in March, 1922, when the Aga Khan went to meet the Prince of Wales he collected 1,540,000 rupees after a stay in the city of two hours only.

An Oriental writer, Ibn Zul Quarnain, has happily described the 'swelling scene' in Bombay when His Highness is taking part in a ceremony that helps to fill his coffers.

'As far as the eye can see, thousands are streaming across the countryside.

'At dawn the great pilgrimage began. Now it is late afternoon, yet still they come. Old men, young men, poor men and rich men, the lame, the halt and the blind.

'Some bare-footed and in filthy rags, others on mules, and, those who are very sick, in rough litters. They have come at the bidding of their High Priest. Presently as the sinking sun sends shafts of flame over the hills, a huge limousine slides silently between the waiting thousands.

'The car stops and from it steps an imposing figure dressed in

flowing Kashmir shawl robes and a Persian lamb head-dress. A sigh, as soft as an evening breeze, runs through the immense throng. In thousands they fall on their knees, their lips moving in silent prayer.

'Rose petals thrown by devoted and worshipping hands fall like gentle rain, and slowly the broad figure lifts one arm above his head to bless them.

'Yes, it is the same man who faced the crowds on Epsom Downs. It is the Aga Khan, overlord of the Ismailis whose "radiant face removes bad luck" according to the praises they are chanting.

'Silently he blesses them. Then as suddenly as he came, he is gone. And behind him he leaves the multitude rejoicing; for have they not fulfilled the life dream of every true Ismaili? Have they not been privileged to set their humble eyes on the mighty Aga Khan, direct descendant of Allah's greatest Prophet?'

This poetic and flowery appreciation of His Highness's appearance outside his Bombay residence, Aga Hall, on this religious occasion lacks but one thing: any reference to the collection of monies.

At these Ismaili celebrations there is the equivalent of the passing of the plate in Protestant places of worship. But on these *al fresco* occasions, whether it be a simple blessing or the more elaborate 'naming' ceremonies, monies are collected in large white sheets, like very large bed sheets.

When a father wishes his son to be named, he holds his child on high and exclaims: 'O Holy One, name this child!' And the Aga Khan pointing his finger at the boy exclaims: 'I name this child Ali', or whatever name occurs to him. Then the happy father drops his contribution into the widespread sheet. The same Oriental writer in less flowery language comments: 'To put it in terms you of the Western hemisphere will understand, the Aga Khan is head of a vast co-operative company with

literally millions of subscribers. . . . Under his inspired leadership the Ismailis have prospered—the 'dividends' shall we call them—have grown. . . . Cheques signed with illustrious names, grubby befingered bills upon obscure *benias* (moneylenders) of the Eastern bazaars, golden mohars, silver rupees, be-nickled four-anna pieces, down to humble copper colour *pies* worth but the 12th part of a penny.

'Always that golden stream flows, never ceasing.'

The Chief Collector of all these vast sums is called a Mukhi. He sends all the monies to the vaults in Bombay. There are only two men in the world who know how much treasure there is in these vaults. One is the Head Mukhi, the other the Aga Khan. But it used to be said among European and Indian bankers in Bombay that there was more wealth in the Aga Khan's vaults than there was in the vaults of the Bank of England.

To this steady stream of treasure, not only from India but from all parts where there are Ismaili communities, there must be added the extra sums that come to the coffers when the Aga Khan goes on tour among these communities, particularly in East and South Africa. It must be a great strain on him but he faces it unflinchingly. Not only does he have to attend official functions and banquets innumerable, but like a political candidate in Britain he has to go visiting every shop, cinema or business place of any kind owned by one of his followers. There he has to sit in the store surrounded by the proprietor, his wife and innumerable progeny and smilingly face a camera. He does not always smile, as his photographs show, but he is very brave about it, and, of course, these visits do bring in a great deal of extra money. So the Aga Khan covers thousands of miles among his scattered parishes, by train and plane, accompanied by the Begum, who always wears Indian saris on these occasions. The three European wives of the Aga Khan have accompanied him on these far-flung trips. The visits to Africa have been tremendously successful, from

every point of view. Despite the difficulties the Indians are meeting with from the Government of South Africa, they are prospering exceedingly—and the vast majority of the prosperous ones are followers, very faithful followers of the Aga Khan. One of his followers, an exceedingly prosperous businessman in Pretoria, made a speech during His Highness's visit to that city in 1946. He obtained applause and laughter when he said: 'In the Bible there is a phrase: Through tribulations ye shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. In this country, Your Highness, we feel we are very near to it.' The speaker, Mr. A. V. Keshavjee, is a descendant of the pioneer Ismaili who went from India to South Africa. Before going, his ancestor sought the advice of the Aga Khan; members of this family became the Aga Khan's Mukhis in South Africa, so everything worked out perfectly. It is not possible to know how many hundreds of thousands of pounds were collected during this, the Aga Khan's most recent visit to his followers in the Union of South Africa, but one may be certain that the normal flow of money was considerably accelerated. But much is collected and much is spent for the benefit of His Highness's followers wherever they may be. One may well take the Ismaili Community in South Africa as a case for illustration.

In February, 1937, there occurred a very unfortunate incident connected with one of the African visits of the Aga Khan. A twenty-two year old Indian merchant named Esmail Hasmani who was said to be very rich and who had played host to His Highness at Dar-es-Salaam was charged with defrauding local banks of £50,000. More than £200,000 was involved in various charges against the young man, who was denounced by a police informer and found hiding in a house. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

In Pretoria there is a magnificent Ismaili Mosque. Alongside on a piece of ground purchased by the Aga Khan out of the funds

provided by the Community is a children's clinic. Ismaili children are practically all inoculated against diphtheria and smallpox. A doctor and a dietician advise mothers as to the care of and feeding of the children. There is a health library and a health publicity service.

Then there is H.H. the Aga Khan's Provincial Education Board, likewise the H.H. the Aga Khan's School, Aga Khan Boy Scouts and Aga Khan Girl Guides. There is an Aga Khan Nursery School and Kindergarten, an H.H. the Aga Khan's Ismailia Provincial Council for South Africa, an H.H. the Aga Khan's Welfare Society, an H.H. the Aga Khan's Volunteer Corps, an H.H. the Aga Khan's Ladies' Volunteer Corps. If one regards these institutions and organisations in South Africa as being merely a cross-section of what exists in Portuguese East Africa and in Kenya and Madagascar and Zanzibar, to say nothing of various similar but perhaps less modern institutions in India, one begins to realise that the Aga Khan is really the Dictator of a loosely knotted Welfare State, to the upkeep of which members of this Welfare State contribute vast sums of money. What may be considered curious, however, is that there is no obligation on the part of the Chief of this Welfare State to render any account to anybody of the sums he receives or disburses. One realises that the amounts spent must be vast and undoubtedly the capital expense must have involved millions of pounds, while the upkeep of all these institutions is no doubt very costly indeed, but there is little doubt that despite the heavy outlay and current overhead charges, the receipts from the Aga Khan's faithful followers are considerably more than sufficient to cover costs.

It should also be noted that in every case it is the name of the Aga Khan himself and not that of the Ismaili Community that is attached as a distinguishing label to each organisation, as if to emphasise that it is he from whose bounty the benefits flow. This is entirely in accordance with his legal rights, rights won

after contests in the Courts. The present Aga Khan's grandfather fought a case in 1864, known as the 'Khoja Case'. The present Aga Khan fought as the chief defendant in 1908 in a suit brought by, among others, a cousin, the daughter of his murdered uncle Janzishah against his mother Lady Ali Shah and himself. The case which was heard in the Bombay High Court by Mr. Justice Russell lasted some weeks. The Judge gave a written judgement that took more than three hours to read. The *Times of India* reporting this historic case said in part, on September 15th, 1908:

'In this very complicated and involved case the plaintiffs' insinuations, among others, were allegations that the Aga Khan and his mother, Lady Ali Shah, had instigated the murders.' Mr. Justice Russell referred to the fact that the Aga Khan was sincerely distressed by these murders and that no evidence was brought to controvert the fact. His Lordship opined that the suggestions and insinuations made against the first Defendant (the Aga Khan) were absolutely false and without a shadow of foundation and ought never to have been made.

With regard to another murder, that of Hussain, his Lordship found that the charge was utterly unfounded. 'As a matter of fact,' said the Judge, 'the Aga Khan had provided for Cassam Shah, brother of the murdered man, and supplied him with funds to hold a commission in the Cadet Corps.'

Other charges against the Aga Khan on which the Judge found in his favour were that he and his mother had caused the Will of his grandfather the first Aga Khan to disappear, and that he had taken to his own use and to that of his immediate family monies handed to him by his followers and intended to be used not for the benefit of the Aga Khan, but for the benefit of his followers.

With regard to the Will, the Judge said: 'Those defendants in their written statement say they have no knowledge of this alleged Will. In the evidence, however, the plaintiff denies that she was

told of the Will by the defendants, but they say they told her. Of course, if the Will existed, it would have disposed of the plaintiff's case, but not an atom of evidence is given as to the Will ever having existed.'

The Judge was equally in favour of the Aga Khan on the question of the monies. His Lordship said: 'I have no hesitation in finding, therefore, that the offerings made by his followers to the Aga Khan for the time being were intended by them (his followers) to be for his own personal use and benefit and that those offerings are made to him from a feeling of deep veneration and reverence, the object of them being that while on the one hand he is to take them for himself, they, on the other hand, are to reap the benefit of them whether it be of a temporal or spiritual character. Looking at the evidence given before me, were I to hold otherwise I should be dealing a blow to the faith of this large community scattered over all parts of the East, the results of which would be incalculable; and for which the evidence before me would not afford any justification whatever.'

The purpose of the principal plaintiff appeared to be, in part, to claim that some of the monies paid to the Aga Khan should be diverted to her and other plaintiffs who were not receiving any such monies, and in support of her claim she cited the Koran which she claimed enjoins payment offerings to members of the family, but the learned Judge said it was clear that this passage in the Koran refers to spoils taken in war and not to offerings such as those in question.

The Judge called attention to the respect the Khojas in Court had shown towards the Aga Khan by standing up when His Highness came into Court. The Judge added that 'one could not help being struck with the dramatic aspect of the situation when two followers of the Aga Khan had called on him at the Ritz Hotel, Paris, and had made him a gift of fifty pounds in English sovereigns and French notes to the value of four pounds.'

The Judge continued: 'During the progress of this case I confess it struck me as a strange thing that there should be any antagonism between the Sunni (the sect opposed to the Ismailis) and the Aga Khan and his followers, for, in my opinion, by the conversion of a large number of Hindu known as Khojas, there have been received into the Mohammedan faith a large body of well-to-do, respectable and physically powerful members of the community who, had it not been for the conversion, must have remained followers of the Hindu religion which, of course, is absolutely different from the Mohammedans'. The offerings to the Aga Khans or as one might more or less call them "Ismail's pence" are in many respects similar to the well-known "Peter's Pence" which have been offered to the Popes for so many years. And that the worship of, and the respect paid to Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed (or as it might be called Ali-olatory) in the East seems to be analogous to the Mariolatory, or worship and respect paid to Mary, the mother of Christ, in the West.'

The Judge made some personal deductions in his judgement when referring to the Aga Khan's evidence that his followers were enjoined to make offerings to him alone. He recalled the evidence given by three witnesses who belonged to what are known as Guptis. 'They are unquestionably Shia Imami Ismailis,' said the Judge, 'but they certainly adhere to some of the Hindu practices; for instance, they burn their dead, and yet they are true followers of the Aga Khan.'

Mr. Justice Russell also made an oblique reference to a familiar grievance of the anti-Aga Khan people, shared with numerous anti-Moslems, namely that the Moslems seek to 'prove' that the Moslems try and 'steal the thunder' of the Hindus. He referred to what is known as the Dasavtas which seeks to convert Hindus to Mohammedanism by proving that the tenth incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu was no other than Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet and the ancestor of the present Aga Khan.

The Judge recalled that the same process of evolution can be traced in so many forms of religion and said serpent worship could be traced down to the time when the serpent is said to have tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden.

'Among the Hindus', said the Judge, 'there is a ceremony at which I myself was many years ago present, wherein the leaves of the Nim-tree were crushed into powder and handed round to the assembled community of fakirs who were bidden to eat the body of Shiva (a Hindu god), a ceremony which by the process of evolution has resulted in what the Christian Church knows as Holy Communion.'

Although there have been a number of written attacks on the Aga Khan since Mr. Justice Russell handed down this historic judgement, allegations concerning the collection of and the spending of monies collected, the judgement of forty-four years ago still provides the ultimate answer to all those criticisms. During the long journeys taken, the thousands of miles covered and the millions visited, never is a dissentient voice heard. One of the few unpleasant incidents recorded occurred in Kenya in 1939 where objections were raised by certain Europeans who referred to 'a coloured man', meaning His Highness the Aga Khan. As a consequence of this unfortunate occurrence, a special house was built to accommodate the Aga Khan whenever he should visit Kenya.

The Aga Khan's duties are partly religious and partly worldly. He divided the Khojas into separate districts for administrative purposes. In the Bombay district the chief Khoja officials are the Mukhi and the Kanurias. These officials are invariably members of wealthy families and are appointed for life. The Mukhi and Kanurias deal with all disputes appertaining to social customs; with such things the Aga Khan declines to have anything to do, but in religious affairs his word is supreme law from which there is no appeal. When in Bombay, the Aga Khan in theory can be

seen by any follower who asks for an audience. Wherever he is, in the East or in Europe, the Aga Khan holds a levee on the day of each full moon. Then any Khoja who is within travelling distance may attend and have an audience with the Aga Khan if he so wishes.

A Mukhi must if summoned attend the home of any Khoja. In theory the Aga Khan will also visit the home of the humblest of his followers if the suppliant first addresses himself to his Mukhi.

The Mukhi must accompany the Aga Khan on such visits. No tribute must be paid direct to the Aga Khan but it must go to the Mukhi. Likewise, the Aga Khan never hands alms directly to a person or an institution but sends his gift to the Mukhi for distribution.

In Kutch there is a different system. There the Khojas were not pleased with the Mukhi dictatorship, as the Aga Khan found out for himself some fifteen years ago when he paid a personal visit. A compromise was reached. The Khojas of Kutch elect their own Mukhi and Kumanas, and if they have reason to believe that their judgements are unreasonable, then they can make direct appeal to the Aga Khan.

In districts where the communities are small, unpaid ministers are appointed by the Aga Khan.

Where the Khojas are not business men but tenant farmers, the Aga Khan has devised yet another form of government by remote control. Here there are sub-divisions, some religious, some financial only. The collection of funds is looked after by a Kumaria who holds the post for life. When possible, the Aga Khan likes to have a State Treasurer hold this post for him. The super-Kumaria appoints a number of agents, like sub-postmasters, to collect the oboles of the faithful. The collections are sent monthly to Bombay.

For religious affairs the Aga Khan appoints an arbitrator or

referee who has perhaps half a dozen assistants scattered over the countryside. In theory appeals may go to the Aga Khan.

In Sind there is yet another system. The city of Karachi is an administrative centre on its own, and so is the Province of Sind. In Sind the Aga Khan's local representatives have no authority whatsoever in religious matters; these things are dealt with by ministers elected by the community and in direct association with the Aga Khan.

In Poona, Kashmir and Southern India generally the Aga Khan's spiritual and financial authority runs on lines similar to those followed in Sind. In Burma the arrangements differ but little. In Zanzibar the Khojas hold annual elections for office, but in most other parts of Africa the Khojas choose their officers annually, without election. Mozambique is the African clearing station for collected funds which are then transferred to Bombay.

Contributors to the coffers of the Aga Khan dare not fail with their contributions. If their religious fervour weakened, His Highness may use his much dreaded power of excommunication. This power is more far-reaching than the similar power exercised by His Holiness the Pope. A Papal decree of excommunication is spiritual only. An Aga Khan decree of excommunication is both spiritual and temporal. If an Ismaili is excommunicated he becomes automatically the equivalent of an untouchable. The whole local community boycotts him. He cannot obtain food or work or take any part whatsoever in communal life. He would be left to die alone.

The excommunicated one, however, has the right to appeal to his minister. If the appeal is upheld, the edict is quashed. If the appeal is refused, the plaintiff has the right to make a supreme appeal to the Aga Khan himself, but it is many years since such an appeal has reached him.

Penances are imposed on a person who wishes to buy his way out of excommunication, but they are very expensive, so much

so that penance is more easily avoided by keeping up the flow of tribute.

The more spectacular donations to the Aga Khan have been on the occasions of his Golden and Diamond Jubilees when he was weighed against gifts of bar gold and rough and polished diamonds.

The Aga Khan celebrated his Golden Jubilee on January 19th, 1936, and was weighed against gold in Bombay. There were 30,000 people to watch the ceremony at Hasnabad where the police could not control the crowds, so many were trampled down and injured. The Aga Khan arrived wearing purple robes and a green turban. The then Begum, his first French wife, wore a green sari. His Highness sat on a dais with his mother, Lady Ali Shah, on his right and the Begum on his left. The ceremony began with the Vice-President of the Golden Jubilee Committee asking permission to weigh His Highness in gold and that he would 'accept the gold, so weighed as a humble token of our love, devotion and gratitude to Your Highness for all the unbounded bounty and benefits that Your Highness's followers have derived during Your Highness's Imamat for the last 50 years'. His Highness then rose from his throne embroidered in real gold, stepped on to the scales painted gold colour, and sat on cushions of rich materials. Bars of bullion were then placed on the other side of the scales. The sum of £25,760 was realised.

When the Aga Khan returned to his throne, a cable from King George V's secretary was read aloud. It said: 'Before his illness, the King informed me of his intention to send His Majesty's warmest congratulations on your Golden Jubilee and every good wish for the future.'

The Aga Khan had already ordered prayers for the King's recovery. The day following the weighing ceremony His Majesty died. The Aga Khan cancelled all festivities and ordered mourning among his followers.

The following year, 1937, the Aga Khan went to Nairobi, where he was again weighed against gold.

In August, 1945, the Aga Khan celebrated his Diamond Jubilee, sixty years as the Imam of the Ismailis. In March of the following year he was weighed against diamonds in the Brabourne Stadium in Bombay and in the presence of 100,000 people.

This time he was accompanied by another Begum, his second French wife whom he had married in 1944. She wore a sari studded with 1,500 diamonds, worth £45,000. Both her stepsons were present; Ali Khan had flown from Europe, and his half-brother, Sadruddin, had accompanied his father and stepmother.

The Aga Khan in Eastern robes sat on cushioned scales while on the other side of the scales were diamonds in bullet proof transparent containers. On this occasion His Highness tipped the scales at a little over seventeen stone.

No official estimate of the value of the diamonds was disclosed, but it was said that it took £640,000 worth of industrial diamonds and brilliants to tip the scales. His followers, by custom, were required to place the equivalent sum in their Imam's exchequer.

The following year the Aga Khan went to East Africa, to Dar-es-Salaam, to be once more weighed against diamonds. On this occasion the festivities went on for ten days. Once again His Highness was accompanied by the Begum on whom he had conferred the name of Mata Salamat, and his two sons. In a speech to 70,000 at the weighing ceremony His Highness said: 'As every one is well aware, the value of these diamonds has been unconditionally presented to me on this occasion. I do not wish to take this amount for myself but to use it for any object that I think is best for my spiritual children. After long reflection, I have come to the conclusion that the very best use that I can make of it is that after the expenses of these celebrations have

been paid for, then the whole of the residue must be given as an absolute gift to the Diamond Jubilee Investment Trust. But this is not an ordinary investment trust such as you find in the City of London. While a considerable part of its capital must be used for investment in the ordinary sense of the term, a greater part goes to the building up of a totally new financial outlook among the Ismailis. Co-operative Societies, Corporations, and, I hope and believe very soon, Building Societies, too, will draw from the investment Trust sums equal to their capital but at a level rate of three per cent and they are not allowed to charge more than six per cent under any conditions from their borrowers.'

This nicely adjusted philosophy hovering between religion and high finance gives the correct impression of His Highness's attitude towards the millions of pounds in tribute his followers in Asia and Africa pay him, but before closing the chapter of wealth that flows to him from the East and turning to His Highness's wealth from the West, it is necessary to remember the Aga Khan's training in finance by that very shrewd financier, his own mother, Lady Ali Shah. She, it will be recalled, handed her son his patrimony which she had increased four-fold, but doubters of the family wealth of the Aga Khan sometimes say, if the Aga Khan's grandfather was so rich, why did he accept a Government pension of £60 per month? The correct answer was given by Sir Charles Napier in 1845, an answer this biographer has already quoted. There is little doubt that Aga Khan I could have, if he would, lived on the pension granted him by the British Government, but that question does not affect one whit the fortune he brought with him from Persia to India, and which formed the foundation of the gigantic fortune that accrued to his grandson, the present Aga Khan, who has added to it both by tribute from his followers and also by his own personal financial genius used in the West.

One of the Aga Khan's admirers, Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah, says

that His Highness has financial interests in at least one hundred business concerns. It has been stated that the Aga Khan was at one time a sleeping partner in a well-known firm of New York Stock Exchange brokers and that he suffered severe financial reverses in the American financial blizzard of October, 1929. This story may be *ben trovato*, but examination of the shareholders' names in such well-known concerns as the Tote Investors Company Limited show that the Aga Khan was one of the original stock holders.

Watching the Aga Khan dealing with his morning mail is a rewarding experience. His personal secretary, Miss Blain, is a beautiful Englishwoman who occupied her post for seventeen years. She graduated from a Kensington secretarial college. Miss Blain comes from a family living in the racing centre of Newbury, Berks. Her knowledge of racing is probably on a par with that of her former employer. Also, she has a remarkably good memory. The Aga Khan would say to her: 'I'm giving a dinner party next week and I want you to invite. . . .' He then rattled off maybe a dozen names. She never asked him to repeat them and she never forgot a name.

Most of the Aga Khan's letters are written in longhand; His own handwriting consists of very small characters and he signs his name in one word, thus: AgaKhan.

His Highness receives an average of one hundred begging letters a day. All letters are dealt with. It is an axiom of his that none of his followers is allowed to be hungry, but it is very difficult for anyone to get the better of him in a financial piece of business, big or small.

Often a considerable part of the morning mail is concerned with letters from dealers. He will dictate a letter thus: 'Write and tell Blank that I won't pay him a penny more than £250 for that three-cornered Cape of Good Hope stamp.' Then he will jump up and examine a Russian brass ikon someone has sent him

on approval and he will dictate a letter making an offer for, or rejecting, it *in toto*. Then he will be off again, dictating a letter about some thousands of tons of grain to be sent to a district in India threatened by famine. Then a letter to the manager of his stud in Ireland. The routine is the same whether he is in his Paris house in Auteuil, at the London Ritz or in his Riviera villa.

Some years ago two British journalists had the idea of founding a chain of English language newspapers in India where one of them had edited two such newspapers. The project was to have been financed by some of the Princes of India. The scheme was put before the Aga Khan, who has a liking for embellishing his conversation with proverbs. On this occasion he said, after listening to the proposition: 'Some Princes and their money are soon parted.'

The Aga Khan found no merit in the enterprise. Neither did the temporal Princes when they learned of the decision of the Aga Khan.

His Highness frequently receives letters from inventors, financiers and confidence tricksters, all promising him rich reward if only he will receive them in audience and listen to their schemes. He has also been the target of blackmailing publications, which make requests for financial backing in return for undertakings not to publish articles of which they sometimes send him specimens. His rule with regard to threatened blackmail is to ignore it completely.

Those who would obtain financial support for their projects from the Aga Khan must obtain his interest within the first five minutes. His procedure with visitors who come to try and interest him in their schemes never varies. He begins with a few polite remarks, then he invites the visitor to explain the reason of his call. Once the visitor starts talking, the Aga Khan never interrupts him until he has made up his mind. Then, if he has

made up his mind against the project, he interrupts with a suave remark reminding of another and somewhat urgent appointment.

If the caller is insistent, the Aga Khan always rises and walks to a window, turning his back on the visitor, while he looks at the view in a seemingly dreamy manner. Then suddenly he will turn with a devastating remark or a quoted proverb.

Visitors who bring photographs, charts or graphs are received very frigidly, but a man who does succeed in interesting him will find himself deeply cross-examined with rapid fire questioning in a manner very reminiscent of Lord Beaverbrook. The businesses in which the Aga Khan has great financial holdings that return rich dividends include the racing business which is reviewed elsewhere, but whatever the business is, there is no doubt that His Highness obtains considerable fun from it, as well as money. So long as his investments pay dividends, the Aga Khan never interferes with the management, but if the businesses do not show signs of success, then His Highness pounces, but usually his *flair* causes the management to aver eventually that the Aga Khan, by using his gift for finance coupled with the result of personal study of the problem, manages to help steer the business concern on an even keel.

In the summer of 1951 a London evening newspaper found occasion to remark that the Aga Khan is not so rich as people imagine him to be.

Of course, that all depends on how rich they imagine him to be.

Long years ago the Aga Khan went to Tully, in Ireland, where the late Colonel Hall Walker who became Lord Wavertree had a famous stud. The Aga Khan took the deepest interest in it, asked many questions about it and no doubt made a mental reservation concerning the advisability of possessing an Irish stud for himself. When the time came, His Highness purchased a stud at Sheshoon on the borders of the Curragh in Co. Kildare. Later he founded another stud at Gillstown, while retaining Sheshoon. He took his son Ali Khan into partnership in the second stud. One of the Aga Khan's racing peculiarities is that he has brood mares only at his studs, both in Ireland and at a smaller one he owns in Normandy where his Derby winner Mahmoud was bred. It is usual for stud owners to have both brood mares and stallions. His fillies he purchased in the open market, regardless of expense.

In 1926 the Director of the National Stud which acquired Tully on the death of Lord Wavertree put through a big deal with the Aga Khan. It sold him two yearlings for £20,000. One of them was Feridoon which for the purpose of the sale was valued at £17,850. At that time it was the highest price ever paid for a yearling. But Feridoon turned out a complete loss. He was eventually sold in France for £13.

He bought Saleve and Nushirairan for 11,500 guineas. He sold them for 85 guineas. Amilcar cost him more than £10,000, and Aftab £14,000. Neither of them ever won a race. He bid £100,000 for Sir John Rutherford's Solario. The bid was refused but the 'lucky' Aga Khan joined a syndicate which secured Solario for £70,000.

He is said to have spent an average of nearly £1,000 a week buying bloodstock, although in one week he once spent £23,000 and at one time his purchases had cost £750,000 without bringing back a penny, but in one year he won twenty-eight races and £57,778 in stake money. In the first fifteen years he was racing he cleared about £300,000.

Success came to the stud comparatively early, for by the end of 1924 the Aga Khan had already won two Classics and had been placed in three others. Moreover, the fillies he had purchased included those fabulous mares Cos, Mumptaz Mahal and Teresina.

The buying of these mares exhibited the Aga Khan's outstanding shrewdness and acumen on the Turf and showed that in racing, as in other ways, his dicta: 'There is no such thing as Luck' may well be true.

His Highness paid 5,000 guineas for Cos as a filly; she won him £9,604 in stake money alone. He paid 9,000 guineas for Mumptaz Mahal at the sales but he recouped himself £13,933 in stake money. So with many of his other horses. Diophon won him the Two Thousand Guineas. He paid 4,000 guineas for Diophon as a yearling, but it won him £23,150.

He won the St. Leger with Salmon Trout which had cost him 3,500 guineas. £13,830 came back to him in stake money. Those are but examples of the money he has made by careful buying, although they are by no means unique cases. Always he bears in mind that expense is no object. A return of £60,517 for an initial outlay of £30,450 is good business as much in the racing as in any other industry.

In 1936 the Aga Khan sold his 1930 Derby winner, Blenheim. The horse was sent to the United States and the price paid was £45,000. Ten years later His Highness sold another of his Derby winners, Bahram, also to the United States. This time the price paid was £40,000. The sale of Bahram was quickly followed by the sale of the Aga Khan's third Derby winner, Mahmoud. This horse fetched only £20,000, half the price of Bahram, but the American purchasers of both considered Mahmoud a better purchase than Bahram, in fact they said the horse was 'dirt cheap at the price', but the Aga Khan is not a man to 'sell and repent'.

Some owners retain large strings of horses in their trainers' stables; not so the Aga Khan. These days a racehorse costs approximately £8 per week per head to train. The Aga Khan and his partner-son 'thin out' their horses. Although His Highness was very keen that British racing should not be cancelled during the last War, he nevertheless reduced his commitments very considerably. Yet, shrewd judge that he is, he purchased a half-share in the French-owned My Love from the late M. Volterra, very shortly before the Derby of 1948. The horse won in the Aga Khan's famous green and chocolate colours.

But the thinning out process continued. Sixteen yearlings were sent from the stud in Ireland to the December Newmarket Sales in 1951. These and similar sales are not a matter of money. The horses sold as yearlings are those the Aga Khan does not believe will reach the high standard he has set himself.

The Aga Khan, however, is too good a sportsman to claim all the credit for his success on the Anglo-French Turf. When he first began buying yearlings in England he sought and obtained the services of that famous racing personality, the late Hon. George Lambton. Colonel Hall Walker was another who guided and advised him and to whom His Highness paid generous tribute in a letter to the Racing Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph.*

His Highness wrote on that occasion that he would probably never have been known as an owner west of Suez had not Lord Wavertree (the former Col. Hall Walker) urged him to take up racing in England. 'He undoubtedly gave me much good advice,' the Aga Khan wrote, 'and up to the last I never took an important decision without asking his opinion. He always told me that had the money I invested in horses been spent according to his views, there would have been no limit to the successes I would have had. Looking back, I see it would have been true in practice year by year.'

In view of the outstanding successes the Aga Khan won in

the English Classics between the moment of his *début* in 1924 and 1948, his 'confession' is curious, as the record below shows. The names of His Highness's 'winners' only are given; horses which were placed second or third are ignored.

1924	2,000 Guineas	St. Leger	
	Diophon (11–2)	Salmon Trout (6–1)	
1930	The Derby		
	Blenheim (18–1)		
1932	The Oaks	St. Leger	
	Udaipur (10–1)	Firdaussi (20–1)	
1935	2,000 Guineas	Derby	St. Leger
	Bahram (7–2)	Bahram (5–4)	Bahram (4–11)
1936	The Derby		
	Mahmoud (100–8)		
1944	St. Leger (run at Newmarket)		
	Tehran (9–2)		
1948	The Derby	The Oaks	
	My Love (100–9)	Musaka (7–1)	
	(half shared with M. Volterra).		
1952	The Derby		
	Tulyar (11–2)		

That is a record of two Two Thousand Guineas, five Derbys, two Oaks and three St. Legers in twenty-four years (including the War years) during which period he topped the list of winning owners ten times. In the 1932 St. Leger the Aga Khan's horses were first, second, fourth and fifth. Apart from these successes in the Classics, most of his wins 'landed at long odds' as the racing touts say; His Highness won many outstanding handicap races, such as the Ascot Gold Cup, the Churchill Stakes and the Cesarewitch, won by Charlie's Mount at odds of 100–1, as well as the Prix d'Arc de Triomphe, the richest endowed race in the world, and run over the course at Longchamps, Paris. Many successes have come to the Aga Khan in France where he also

trains, notably at Deauville. In fact, one hardly dares to think what success would have come to His Highness if, as he said, he had followed without question the advice of Lord Wavertree.

Lord Wavertree himself was one of the outstanding characters of the English Turf. He was both forthright and a little odd in his opinions. In racing circles he was sometimes known as 'Whimsical Walker'. It was perhaps for these reasons, and despite his prominence in racing, that the Jockey Club did not make him a Member until he was sixty-eight.

The Aga Khan is an Honorary Member of the Jockey Club, which august body, it is said, does not always approve of His Highness's very personal and independent views on racing, such as the entry of several horses in a race when the horses are not always trained by the same trainer. Possibly the Aga Khan finds the views of the Jockey Club somewhat dated, but he continues to run his horses as he thinks fit and in ways, of course, to which he has a perfect right.

In point of fact, the Aga Khan is very jealous of his high reputation as an owner. In 1924, the first year of his success on the English Turf, he sued a very prominent English newspaper for libel, an action that concerned a comment on his alleged methods of running his horses. The action was settled out of Court. He is very strict about his horses and the methods of running them. Some years ago at Longchamps he and I were watching a race in which he had a horse running. His horse was second, beaten at the winning post. He said to me: 'I think that horse was "pulled".' If the owner was correct, the jockey must have been a great artist.

The strictness of the Aga Khan is perhaps tempered by his unfailing optimism concerning his horses and his real distress if one of the horses he has 'tipped' fails to succeed. I went racing with him another afternoon at Longchamps where he had a horse running in one of the races. I asked him what he thought

of its chances and he said he thought it would win. I had a small bet on his horse. It lost.

After the race His Highness asked if I had backed the horse and I said I had. Had I lost much? he inquired. I said no, I had not. We then walked about the paddock watching the horses being saddled for the next race.

Since about fifty years, bookmaking in France has been prohibited, but nevertheless there are a number of clandestine '*books*' and also some on the racecourse with whom some owners sometimes bet. The Aga Khan went up to one of these men in the paddock and said: 'Put me 26,000 francs on Jefferson Cohn's horse for a place.' He then went to the Owners' Stand to watch the race while I remained by the rails. Cohn's horse was second.

'Did you back it?' asked His Highness. I said I did. 'I hoped you would,' he said, 'that's why I spoke loudly, hoping you would hear, but after giving you one loser, I did not want to give you another.'

His Highness attended the Annual Derby Lunch at the London Press Club in 1951. When he spoke he said he thought that his horse Fraise du Bois 'stood a good chance'. When leaving the Club and taking his hat and coat from the cloakroom attendant, His Highness said: 'I told them in there that I *thought* my horse would win, but I am *certain* he will win.'

Fraise du Bois was left at the starting gate.

The Aga Khan likes those Press Club Derby Lunches and always attends them when he has a horse running in the Epsom Classic. A few years ago he was received on arrival by the then Chairman, Mr. Horace Sanders, whose size approaches that of His Highness. 'Please precede me,' requested the Aga Khan. 'I don't know how far I should precede Your Highness,' replied Mr. Sanders. 'Well,' said the Aga Khan, glancing at Mr. Sanders, 'it is evident that we cannot proceed side by side.'

So long as a trainer is successful with his horses, the Aga Khan

does not trouble him over-much, but a trainer is rather in the position of the manager of a business in which the Aga Khan has invested money; if the dividends are passed, if the target of racing success is not reached, there is liable to be a change.

The first horses the Aga Khan purchased were sent to Whatcombe to be trained by R. C. Dawson, who had charge of Blenheim, the Derby winner purchased from Lord Carnavon. Seven years later Frank Butters took over the Aga Khan's horses. He had them until he retired. Then His Highness's horses went to Marcus Marsh, while some of them are now with the former jockey turned trainer, Harry Wragg.

In France the Aga Khan also made changes. His horses are now with the Chantilly trainer, Richard Carver, who trained My Love.

The question is often asked, whether the Aga Khan bets. Some of his admirers affirm that he does not, ever, but it is what the Racing Correspondent of *The Times* calls a 'Confident Selection' to assert that he does. Like the humblest punter, he backs horses when he fancies their chances, but he likes to obtain the best odds. In view of his vast wealth one cannot say that he is a heavy gambler. A matter of perhaps £200 would represent a maximum. It is worthy of note that if anyone had placed a £200 bet on every one of the Aga Khan's winners of the English Classic races, he would have had a profit of more than £20,000, while a like amount on his Cesarewitch winner would have brought in £200,000. Yet at the end of the 1951 Flat Racing Season, a London writer on horse-racing commented that on account of the increased cost of keeping racehorses, the Aga Khan was one of the very few owners who could afford to race horses without betting, but whatever betting means to His Highness—and one suspects that, because he is human, he likes to win—betting in terms of money means very little. Yet there is not the slightest

doubt that he likes to obtain the best possible odds. This quite reasonable desire once nearly cost his biographer a considerable sum of money.

Again the setting was Longchamps racecourse, a very sunny and lovely Sunday afternoon in June. The enclosure was very crowded. I casually met the Aga Khan and we stopped to chat for a few minutes. Suddenly he thrust a number of banknotes into my hands. 'I have a horse in the next race,' he said, 'I think the odds on the *pelouse* will be better than they will be here. Do me a favour, back my horse for me over there.'

I stuffed the notes into my pocket, fifteen one thousand franc notes, a little more than £100 in those pre-War days, and began to press my way towards a gate from whence one was allowed to cross the course to enter the *pelouse*. The crush was intense. I was gradually making progress when I met an American friend I had not seen in a long time. Momentarily I forgot my errand as we began to talk, but I was reminded quickly enough by the tolling of the saddling bell. I cut short our conversation, seized my friend by the arm and begged him to help me fight my way to a betting booth on the *pelouse*. Nobly he came to my assistance. We ran across the course and then began something like a free for all Rugby scrum. There was no time to look around to find a booth that had the shortest queue; to my jaundiced eyes, they all seemed to have the largest attendance ever known. Now there could be no more edging or pushing. All one could do was to wait impatiently in line, a line that seemed to move with the feet of a tortoise. Then my turn came. It was happily a 500 franc ticket booth. '*Le* 8, *trente fois gagnant*' I managed to say, and as the attendant turned and began to tear off thirty tickets, an electric bell trilled like an impatient telephone signal, and there was the sound of crashing metal as they slammed down the iron portcullis that enclose the *guichets* while a race is being run.

I was the last person to 'get the money on'.

The Aga Khan's horse won at odds of 4–1, paying a few francs more in the *pelouse* than it did in the *pesage*.

It is said that the Aga Khan is much influenced in horse breeding by the theories of the late Colonel Vullier. This may well be, but it is very possible that the knowledge of Miss Blain, his secretary, weighed more with him than any other outside influence, apart from that of his son, the Ali Khan, but his son's opinions and their possible weight are more often than not a matter of the personal relations of father and son when the opinions are given. But despite the clouds that sometimes overshadow relations, the Aga Khan never fails to admire his elder son's judgement of horseflesh. Remembering how this affection for horses came to him himself from his semi-blind grandfather, Hussein Ali, it must be a great source of pleasure to him to see it handed on to the fourth generation. Yet, popular owner as the Aga Khan is on the English Turf, it is very possible that the real reason for his attachment to horse-racing in England has never been made known.

The acclaim of the crowds when one of his horses flashes first past the post no doubt sounds musically to his ears, that is but natural. It must be pleasant indeed to know that a yearling one has bred oneself won the Derby, but in the days when the art of graceful living was still paramount in Britain, an art that began to wane in 1914 and was finally extinguished in 1939, to be a prominent racehorse owner in Britain gave a *cachet* such as was to be found nowhere else.

The Aga Khan began his sporting life in England under the ægis of Edward VII, whose horse Jeddah, it will be remembered, His Highness saw win the Epsom Derby. Yet it was not until a dozen years after King Edward died that the Aga Khan launched himself into the uncertain sea of horse-racing, but the friends of the late King were his friends: the Marquis de Soveral, sometime Portuguese Ambassador to London, Lord Lonsdale, the famous

'Yellow Earl', without whose presence no fashionable race meeting was complete. They and their like were ever ready to give the wealthy Eastern potentate a helping hand if he so needed. Quickly the patina of those pleasure-loving 1920s covered the jovial Aga Khan, as it covered with glossy paint such legendary figures as Gordon Selfridge, who gave such wonderful parties on the upper floors of his Oxford Street establishment. The Aga Khan was as at home in such circles as he was everywhere else.

To this super-Bohemia came those Pepys of the New Age, the Marquis of Donegal and the late Lord Castlerosse, and the name of the Aga Khan figured frequently in their journalistic columns. The bright shiny personalities of jockeys in fashion, cabaret stars and popular cartoonists were to be seen mingling with Members of Parliament, impresarios, dancing authors and newspaper proprietors. Passing through the throng was that smiling man the Aga Khan.

Stories about him, *ben trovato* no doubt, found their way into the gossip columns of the newspapers. They were all good-humoured and all followed more or less the same pattern. It was a sort of Aga Khania. 'Have you heard the latest about the Aga Khan?' people asked one another. 'It seems that an American, Mrs. Malapropos, returned from a trip to India and said what impressed her most was a glimpse of the Aga Khan by moonlight.'

Perhaps she was the same lady who, on being introduced to the Aga Khan, said: 'I know your brother, Otto, back in New York.'

But there was still what was left of the Edwardian 'racing set' socially intact. The Aga Khan, happy man, had a foot in each camp.

His name appeared, say, staying with a house party at Mrs. Ludwig Neumann's place at Newmarket. In the early morning, a cap on his head, a heavy fur coat and white flannel trousers, he could be seen in the morning mist on the Heath, watching a string of horses at their work.

Royal Ascot, and once again he would be there; a furnished house rented for the meeting. Doncaster, a gay house party at the Abbey, and the Aga Khan among those present.

Never before had an Indian Prince been so intimately received in British Society.

The Ritz was always his London headquarters. Like mortals, this man, who is a god to millions of his followers, has been troubled by Income Tax problems, and sometimes he consulted Sir Frank Brown as to the length of time he could stay in Britain without becoming liable to British Income Tax. But one may reasonably surmise that such problems never caused him sleepless nights; neither did they ever deter him from figuring prominently in a world of pleasure, both exclusive and not so exclusive, as was to be found in Britain until an iron curtain marked Austerity finally descended.

But although England was the setting of the main scenes in His Highness's sporting life, the scene was not English exclusively. He was able to absent himself when the occasion demanded. He went to Japan and visited the Emperor in Tokio, studied the Japanese scene and reached the conclusion that one day Japan would disturb the world's peace. The Aga Khan's sporting adventure, as has been shown, also took him into France, where he raced most successfully in Paris and Deauville. But there is no doubt that the cradle of horse-racing was the place where he most savoured success.

Since the 1939–45 War, the racing successes of His Highness's colours have been fewer. Perhaps failing health and advancing years have had something to do with the falling away, but no doubt His Highness would not countenance the racing man's dicta: 'It's all the luck of the game.' As has been said, he does not believe in Luck. Man can and must command success, in racing as in everything else; besides, racing can be made into a very profitable business.

CHAPTER XII

AGA KHAN: INTERNATIONALIST

THE AGA KHAN once in print referred to himself as an Internationalist, but it is extremely probable that few who read his magazine article appreciated the term His Highness applied to himself. To many, to the majority, the word Internationalist given to the Aga Khan would seem to denote a man of undoubted wealth and leisure, who was equally at home at Deauville as in Monte Carlo, Aix-les-Bains or in Bombay. In truth, so it was, just as the gossip writers in English and French perceived, but yet this in itself did not explain the inner meaning of His Highness's pronouncement. When he claimed to be an Internationalist he was proclaiming both his belief in, and his personal ability to deal with, world problems from an international, instead of a national, angle.

It has been seen how over the years the Aga Khan was able to perform useful actions for Great Britain, actions that because of their very nature had to be performed under cover and in secret, and therefore were unknown to a public that for a quarter of a century had had its eyes focused on the Aga Khan's more colourful exploits on the racecourses of England and France, with occasional glimpses of him in some gay Continental Casino. Yet there was still another facet of his strange and varied life, the one that showed him at such International meeting places as the League of Nations Council chamber in Geneva, were it for one of the routine meetings of the Assembly, or during the sessions of the ill-fated World Conference on Disarmament where he headed the All India Delegation.

For many years the Aga Khan had shown considerable interest in and no little knowledge of the subject, and it has already been told that a speech His Highness made in London at a dinner

of the Navy League, when he made Disarmament his text, attracted wide attention. Now in Geneva in 1932, at the 14th Plenary Session of the Conference he had a world wide audience; he was speaking for the whole of India and talking to men and women who were what he claimed to be: internationalists.

'Almost all of us here', said His Highness, 'are preoccupied with the pressing problems that have arisen as a consequence of the Great War. Among these the most urgent is that of disarmament, with all that it implies. But let us not forget that for many years before the war this problem was insistent. The general burden of armaments had created alarm among those who were able to look ahead, and widespread dissatisfaction among the vast masses of the populations in all continents and countries—Eastern and Western alike—and India was no exception.

'I am speaking here for many millions of my fellow-countrymen, who place the love of peace and the repudiation of violence among the first of the human virtues. With them, the ideal of peace is no mere economic expedient; it is an element deep-rooted in their very nature. That is the spirit which it is my task to reflect in making what contribution I can to the proceedings of this Conference.

'The striving of mankind after some more organic development than the mere clash of nations and states is nothing new. Many of us who are taking part in this Conference will remember the hopes raised in our hearts by the first Hague Peace Conference; and we remember the grievous disappointment that followed its meagre results. The second Hague Conference was also a failure and even from the beginning little was ever expected from it.

'Since then we have had the terrible lessons of the World War. Confined in the first place by historical and other causes to one continent, it gradually spread its devastating effects throughout the world. In distant India, no less than in Europe, it created a

host of mourners and left a legacy of bitter tragedy. Over a million of my fellow-countrymen were called to arms, of whom more than fifty thousand laid down their lives. The ravages of war, in its toll of humanity, its social and economic disturbances, have left their mark on India as on the other countries which were drawn into its vortex.

'With the coming of peace new hopes were raised that at last we had learned our lesson; that we could look to a better world in which force would be replaced by disarmament and arbitration, by the adjustment of national differences and difficulties through methods of peaceful co-operation; and that the reign of law was now to be firmly established.

'Alas. We have found that armaments still hold sway, and that the feeling of insecurity persists. It is by no means certain that the war to end war has been fought and won.

'To-day social and economic conditions throughout the world make it imperative that unless the fabric of organised human Society is to collapse vigorous steps must be taken forthwith. In this work the present Conference is called to play a leading part. On the moral side, we must set ourselves to remove the paralysing effects of fear, ill-will and suspicion. On the material side, it is absolutely essential that the non-productive effort devoted to warlike preparations should be reduced to the bare minimum. That minimum has already been stressed by the spokesman of the United States of America. In India we have constantly borne in mind the underlying principle, namely, the maintenance of forces that shall be no more than adequate to guarantee peace and order on and within her borders.

'India's own scale of armaments allows no margin for aggressive uses. The size of her forces has to be measured with reference to the vastness of her area and the diversity of her conditions. The fact is so often forgotten that I will venture to recall it here, that the area of India is more than half that of the whole of Europe

and her population nearly one-fifth of that of the entire globe. May I also recall that within India herself more than one-third of the total area is under the jurisdiction of Rulers of the Indian States. Many of these maintain forces of their own, in part for the preservation of order within the States' boundaries, and to some extent also for co-operation in the task of guaranteeing the defence of India against the possibility of aggression from without. The remoteness of India is my excuse, if I need one, for alluding to these facts.

'A happy augury of our proceedings—and I can say with experience of various conferences that it is indeed a happy augury—is that we have already at this early stage heard and bent our minds to a number of concrete proposals. This is the more helpful and fortunate since the time for detailed study in commissions of the Conference is fast approaching. Before we met here expectations ranged between the high hopes of idealists and the scepticism of those who looked for little or no result. The very atmosphere of our meetings and the earnest attention paid on all sides to fruitful suggestions give us confidence that we can now work for positive results. Would anyone have ventured to say three weeks ago, that so much practical ground-work could be accomplished within so short a time?

'I think I am right in saying that there is already a general body of support for detailed suggestions of the kind that have been put before us by the representative of that great country, the United States of America, and may I say that America's long record of success in combining peace with prosperity is one that fitly entitles her to take the active part she has already taken in our deliberations? I look with hope and confidence to a continuance of her efforts.

'Her suggestions are fresh in our minds. In dealing with them I might seem to be travelling away from the more immediate problems of my country if I refer to the larger questions of naval

defence. But I would recall that India is essentially interested in these matters. Her coast line extends over five thousand five hundred miles, a length comparable perhaps with that of any of the States here represented. Though in the main an agricultural country she possesses five great centres of industry that from their situation are exposed to attack from the sea, and her volume of sea-borne trade is a vital factor in her prosperity. She acknowledges the immeasurable advantages given her by the protecting power of the British Navy. In saying this I have in mind not only defence in war but the policing of the seas for the benefit of all who go about their lawful occupations. If not a maritime Power, India has maritime interests that entitle her to share in the discussion of all measures for relieving the burden of naval armaments.

'Then, again, we will co-operate to the full in devising means for protecting the civil population against ruthless methods of warfare. Thus we support such proposals as that for the total abolition of the submarine, and of lethal gas and bacteriological warfare, and the use of poison generally.

'Again, we will pay special attention to any suggestions for limiting the destructive power of air bombardment, and generally for restricting weapons of warfare which may broadly be classed as aggressive in their purposes. I know well the difficulty of marking off these weapons with any degree of logical precision. But there is already a great body of sentiment which demands that such a distinction can and should be made, and that no merely technical obstacles should be allowed to stand in the way.

'To focus discussion on all these matters we have before us the draft Convention. We whole-heartedly recognise the patient thought and work out of which it has been constructed, and we readily accept it as the starting point of our new labours. Its detailed provisions deserve, and will receive, the closest examinations. We shall have to consider whether the principle of

budgetary limitation may not provide an invaluable cross check on the limitation of armaments. We shall have to face the intricacies of the problem fully and frankly.

'We must meet the difficulty, for instance, of comparing the very different facilities for production that exist in different countries. We must deal with the problems of relating the cost of highly paid members of a voluntary force to that of the lower members of a force recruited by conscription. And here let me say, on behalf of my country, that India would welcome anything that can be done to limit the burden of conscription and so to release human energy for the purely peaceful activities for which it was destined.

'The authors of the draft Convention, however, themselves urge that it should be supplemented wherever possible by any further constructive proposals that at present lie outside its scope. For the work of peace that we have in view we must not concentrate a powerful frontal attack on warfare on one or two points only. We must consolidate the establishment of peace. We must make it invulnerable by the limitation of armaments, by the development of arbitral methods, by each and every means of giving to weak and strong alike an abiding sense of security.

'The basis of all security is a foreign policy rooted in mutual goodwill and co-operation; a foreign policy in which no country covets its neighbour's possessions or seeks to infringe its moral and spiritual rights. Strides have already been taken in this direction, notably in the Treaty of Locarno. Those four great statesmen (Briand, Chamberlain, Mussolini and Stresemann), whose names will always be associated with that agreement, have placed not only their own countries, but the whole world, under a lasting debt of gratitude. The spirit of Locarno is, however, no fitful spark. For many years it has governed the relations between the States that compose the two great continents of North and South America—and here the case that comes most readily to the

mind of a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations is that of the United States of America and Canada, where the very idea of aggression has been so completely banished that whatever other calamities may threaten or befall their citizens, the calamity of mutual warfare never enters into their lives or thoughts. May there not still be ample room to develop regional fraternities which could in course of time come to cover the whole globe, to act as a reinforcement to the common instrument that already exists in the League of Nations with all its varied activities?

'For shaping the work of future world peace, France, who has so often led the world in brilliant ideas, has put forward far-reaching proposals which have already arrested our attention. We must approach them from two sides. We must bear in mind the practical problems to which they may give rise, the vast and formidable adjustment of machinery that they may involve. But let us not lose sight of the ideal by which they are inspired. Let us keep before us the possibility of a better world organisation, created not for sectional interests or for self-assertion, but for the single purpose of freeing each one of the many millions on this planet from the fear of war and from the burden of guarding against war in time of peace. The ideal, distant though it may be, will, I venture to say, carry an intimate appeal to my own fellow-countrymen, for whom the greatest good is that each individual should go about his daily task in peaceful and ordered co-operation with his neighbour.

'I have placed this ideal in the forefront to show the spirit in which I would approach the practical problems underlying these proposals. We shall neither exaggerate nor evade them. For India, the first problem would be how a supreme world authority could be constructed so long as great and powerful countries like the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and several States who are India's neighbours remain outside the League of Nations. India has only one desire—to live

in goodwill and amity with her neighbours. She is watching with friendly interest the processes to which they are now devoting themselves of re-adjusting their national and economic life, and she is not unhopeful that in the event they may find themselves able to assume the full rights, duties and responsibilities of Members of the League of Nations.

'I will mention some other problems to which the proposals would give rise. For instance, would it be possible to compose an organisation to direct the forces under the command of the world authority? Can it be formed out of the nationals of the various countries; and if so, how can it function if the international force has at any time to be employed against one of those countries. Again, the central body of the world authority would have to be equipped with the power to take prompt and decisive action. Experience, so far, has unfortunately shown the extreme difficulty of assuring this condition, which nevertheless would be essential to the prestige, and indeed the existence, of a world authority possessing the final power to enforce its will upon recalcitrants. Further, the function of the forces maintained by the world authority, if they should ever have to be set in action, will largely be to defend the weaker against the more powerful; yet both will be represented on an equal footing in the League. Here we encounter the thorny question whether decisions would be taken by a majority or by a unanimous vote alone. There is, moreover, the problem—which may be of special interest to India—whether the forces maintained by the world authority should be stationed at some central spot or distributed regionally in areas where the possibility of conflict may have to be taken into account. Beyond all this, the establishment of a world authority would call for a vast and complex adjustment of the manifold provisions of international law. That may well be a stupendous problem, no less than the others I have indicated.

'However, I do not wish to dwell on the difficulties. I instance

them to show that a vast amount of ground has yet to be traversed before we can confidently say that this, that or the other solution will terminate the problems and perplexities in which we are now living. But once again let us bear in mind what may be implied in the ideal which I have sketched. In the organisation of States, a universal feature is the maintenance of a police force which commands respect just because it embodies the authority of the State; but behind it is a judicial organisation which equally represents that authority. The one is dependent on the other. Both these bodies would have to find a parallel if humanity should work its way towards an all-embracing world organisation. The judiciary would have to draw on the best representatives of the ability of nations, and of mankind. The central authority, acting as a whole, would have to exercise more than merely judicial or advisory functions. If confronted in various areas with vast internal forces of discontent it might in its ultimate state be called upon to carry out rectifications, realinements and readjustments in accordance with the wishes of the people most vitally concerned. Its duty would be to give effect to those wishes without ill-will and without risk of conflict between the nations. Above all, it should be a living and developing organism and not the dead hand of the past trying to prevent the full and healthy development of the future.

'Clearly this ideal will demand all our best thought and our most patient study before it can come near fulfilment. Let us face the facts and agree that only a series of world conferences can lead us to the achievement of this happy end for mankind.

'Meanwhile, we must concentrate on the work that lies immediately to our hand. There is no excuse for us to sink back in despair and abandon ourselves to cut-throat competition and the ceaseless rivalry of armaments. Rather we must see and develop to the full the instruments that are already in our hands. In particular, we cannot afford to cast aside the practical results

achieved at the cost of such long and careful discussion by the Preparatory Commission. And to look further afield, it is inconceivable that the League of Nations as it now exists, with the immense and world-wide moral prestige that it has already won for itself, should not forge ahead. Let us devote our best energies to this great purpose. Above all let us seize the occasion which has now called us together. Disarmament in its widest sense—the neutralisation of war, the security and peace of mankind—can and must be taken in hand. Let us go forward with it here and now.

'There is a cry going up from the heart of all the peace-loving citizens of every country for the lessening of their military burdens, for a decrease in the financial load which those burdens impose, for the security of civil populations against indiscriminate methods of warfare, and above all, for security against the very idea of war. It is their growing hope and demand that all the moral authority of the League should be used now and strengthened in every case to prevent aggression and to support and establish the reign of peace, law, arbitration and international goodwill. My countrymen, to whom the cause of peace is sacred, since time immemorial, will anxiously follow our endeavours and wholeheartedly pray for their success.'

In 1952, with the democratic world weighed down with the burden of paying for and carrying arms, it is with poignant feeling that one reads the Aga Khan's words uttered thirty years earlier. 'The cry going up from the heart' came through the mouth of a really ardent Internationalist who, like so many others, found the cry unheard.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INDIA HE KNEW

THE BIOGRAPHER HAS a hard task finding exactly the right niche in India into which to place the figure of the third Aga Khan, who is the subject of this book, for although he has been for nearly seventy years the spiritual head of problematic millions, most of whom have their habitat in India and Pakistan, he was for a great number of years, exactly how many it is difficult to say, the political leader of approximately seventy million Indian Moslems. Had it not been for British India being accorded Dominion status, there was no apparent reason why His Highness should not have continued his dual rôle, but this political leadership was an intangible thing; it was not, for example, leadership conferred by any popular vote. The Aga Khan, it is true, was for seven years the head of the Moslem League but this body lost much of its importance after he ceased to be the head. When Pakistan emerged as a sovereign State, a Moslem State, inevitably the majority ruled, and the majority followed the tradition of the new broom. It is possible that the birth pangs of Pakistan might have been smoothed if the State had called upon the experienced wisdom of the Aga Khan, but all too soon he was in conflict over the matter of the official language; neither did his tentative attempts to mediate in the conflict between India and Pakistan meet with approbation from either side. But perhaps before giving an accounting of the Aga Khan's services to India, services it must be said that consisted for the most part of very sound advice, freely given, one should regard with attention the background of the India he knew.

When the late Ramsay MacDonald was addressing the final meeting of the London Round Table Conference he began: 'My Hindu and Moslem friends——'

'We are only Indians here,' interrupted Mr. Gandhi.

'My Hindu friends—and others,' the Premier began again. The Aga Khan who was present said nothing. He knew.

It was not by posing, jovially smiling, for the photographers that the Aga Khan and Mahatma Gandhi could dispel the vast differences which separated not only their religious and political beliefs but also their personalities. Looking back one sees only too clearly that the British public was misled, or perhaps misled itself about those two so different men.

Gandhi appeared in London wearing a home spun blanket, his head clean shaven. It was known that he ate only dates and drank goat's milk. He slept on the floor of a settlement house in the East End. But this carefully built up picture of an Indian saint skilfully obscured the picture of an unsuccessful Indian lawyer who once practised in Johannesburg, South Africa. But such Gandhi was before he went into Indian politics. It may have been good British policy for Earl Mountbatten to compliment and favour Gandhi as he did before the Mahatma fell a victim to an Indian assassin, but it is difficult to reconcile such a policy with the known facts.

In India the British outlawed child marriage and 'suttee', the practice of Hindu widows throwing themselves on to the flames in which their husbands' bodies burned. Yet the followers of Gandhi avowed that when India returned to Indians those two terrible outlawed customs would be readopted.

Comparisons between Gandhi and the Aga Khan verge on the ridiculous. While Gandhi slept on an East End floor, ate dates and drank goat's milk, the Aga Khan, wearing the usual Savile Row clothes he always wears in Europe, lived in his usual flower-decked suite at the Ritz, ate of the best and drank champagne. But the Aga Khan never entered politics as Gandhi did; he was living as he had always lived. During Gandhi's lifetime the Aga Khan treated him, publicly and privately, with the utmost respect.

He sank all his differences, both religious and political, in order, as he said, to present an All Indian Team at the Round Table Conference, but some time after Gandhi's death His Highness in a letter to the *Star* revealed how Gandhi had compared himself to Karl Marx and quoted a conversation he had had with the Mahatma in which Gandhi had expressed his clear desires to follow in the footsteps of the father of Bolshevism. This may not surprise those who followed closely the many contradictions in Gandhi's life and in his speeches, but it should certainly help doubters to make up their minds. This statement, of course, applies solely to the differences of a political nature that separated the Aga Khan as the political leader of Indian Moslems from Gandhi, the Hindu leader.

Islam is an Arabic word the Mohammedans give to their religion. It means submission to the Will of God. The Islamic creed is: There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet. The faith of the Mohammedans implies belief in God, angels, inspired books, the prophets; the Day of Judgement; God's predestination of Good and Evil.

The Mohammedans believe that God has revealed Himself to man through prophets, to some of whom He gave a book, namely: to Moses, the Law, to Christ, the Gospel, and to Mohammed, the Koran.

To an unbiased layman the Koran presents a remarkable affinity with the Old Testament, but the Mohammedans say that the Christian idea of a Trinity is a mistaken one. They aver that God's divine nature can be expounded out of Power, Unity and Goodness.

The question of the abolition and restoration of the Caliphate has already been discussed here, but it must be stressed that the Indian Moslems, or at least the majority of them, always upheld the Caliphate and when it was abolished they desired its restoration. Therefore, as political leader of the Moslems of India, the Aga Khan must have always borne that point in mind.

This desire of the Indian Moslems was no doubt a part of their wish for the establishment of a Pan-Islamic League; apart from that, the Indian Moslems believed that a restoration of the Caliphate would help to restore law and order throughout the East. What actually happened is recounted a little later.

The Moslems are always looking for portents into which they read significance. Such a one was the marriage of Azam Jah, heir to the Nizam of Hyderabad, with the Princess Dari Chehvab, a daughter of the ex-Caliph of Turkey. In this event they saw—or perhaps hoped for is the more correct way of expressing their feeling—that one day the Nizam would claim the Caliphate.

During his whole life the Aga Khan has had to attune his Westernised mind to such manifestations in the East, but at times there may well have been a conflict in his mind between his religious and his political scruples. Also there were times when unconsciously perhaps he allowed his Western experiences to overshadow his more rigid Indian tenets. With regard to his spiritual duties he had always, until he was sixty-one years of age, the benefit of his mother's wisdom and her tremendous driving force helping him during his frequent absences to look after his personal followers, but in the political field in India, although he was always on good terms with a succession of Viceroys, he never had anybody but himself on whom to depend, and he had always to bear in mind that for every one Moslem in India there were three Hindus.

When I returned to Europe from my first tour of India and met the Aga Khan, he asked me how I would sum up my impressions. I replied that I found the Indian Moslems to be a more virile people than the Hindu. 'Then why don't you arm us?' he snapped. But the Hindu leaders always maintain that the Indian Moslems are not wholly of the warrior race of Moslems who invaded India; they claim and with partial reason at least, that the Moslems of India are Hindus and others who have been converted

to Mohammedanism. In the famous Aga Khan lawsuit we saw how Mr. Justice Russell appeared to share this conclusion, one that must have added to the difficulties that faced the Aga Khan as a political leader.

In Calcutta once I saw a typical instance of the religious difficulties which certainly confronted both Hindu and Moslem leaders. According to the Mohammedan religion it is forbidden for anyone to make or publish a picture of the Prophet. A book with such a picture was published and sold by a Hindu who, while he was at his midday meal, was stabbed to death by two Moslem youths. After the murder the young men just stood there and waited to be arrested. They were tried and sentenced to death.

Ordinarily they would have been hanged without question but as it happened, while the two youths were waiting to be hanged, a Hindu girl student tried to assassinate Sir Stanley Jackson, the then Governor of Bengal. It was the Moslem Chancellor of the University who saved the Governor's life by pulling him out of range of the girl's revolver. That action of the Moslem Chancellor stirred up the Moslem population of Calcutta. 'A life for a life' they demanded. Sir Stanley Jackson was not unimpressed; he decided to request Viceroy Willingdon to reprieve the two Moslems. He did so, but the Viceroy refused.

The reaction to the refusal was dangerous. For three nights running the mosques were full of Moslems praying, weeping and wailing for the reprieve of the two murderers. Feeling ran so high that a cable was sent to the King-Emperor in London, asking for a reprieve. When this request was also rejected, feeling ran very high indeed. With much difficulty a Moslem mob was persuaded not to march on Government House. The armed forces in Calcutta were warned to stand-to in case of communal riots breaking out when the hanging took place. Then suddenly the scene changed.

Somebody said: 'But those two young Moslems killed an unbeliever; if they are reprieved and spend their lives in prison they will not attain Heaven, but if they are hanged for killing an unbeliever, they will go straight to Paradise.' The two youths were duly hanged. Nobody minded a scrap.

Before leaving the question of the influence religions in India had on Indian politics prior to the British departure from India, something must be said about the part played by missionaries.

Of all the various Christian religions represented in India, the Roman Catholic missionaries were by far the most successful. At the time of the political change over there were more than two million Roman Catholics in India, but although they achieved—and possibly are still achieving—much good work, it is doubtful whether the non-British missionaries acted wholly in the interests of the established Government of the British Raj. There were many American missionaries in India who showed very considerable political sympathy with those Indians whose one purpose was to drive the British out of India. It is very probable that those missionaries one has in mind, and who had very considerable funds at their disposal, erred through ignorance of the dangers they were fermenting by preaching politics mixed with religion.

The Simon Report on India rightly paid tribute to the schools and hospitals founded and maintained by missionaries, and it was stressed that the missionaries lived on terms of friendship and peace with both Moslems and Hindus, yet it was an unfortunate fact that from time to time missionaries had to be asked to leave districts where their activities were judged to be more political than religious. This is yet another facet of the India the Aga Khan knew.

Earlier in this book it was stated that there might be some doubt as to the wisdom the Aga Khan displayed in putting so much insistence on spreading education in India. This problem is worth more than a passing glance.

One of the greatest French colonists, the late Marshal Lyautey, had some very clear cut ideas about the education of natives in overseas possessions.

I had been with Lyautey in French Morocco and something I had written about his work there caused him to invite me to visit him in Paris on his retirement. At that particular time Britain was having very considerable trouble in India, both with the Hindus and the Moslems. Not unnaturally I asked the old Marshal what he thought about it. He excused himself by saying he hardly knew India at all. But I pressed him to tell what in his opinion was the root problem. He said he thought the major difficulties had arisen from 'too much education'.

'When I was in Morocco,' he said, 'I used to ask the Residency: "how many Civil Service jobs will become vacant next year?" Supposing they said five hundred. "*Bon*," I would say, "then see to it that not more than five hundred students graduate from the universities next year." '

Lyautey's statement may possibly be regarded as a piece of French cynicism or French logic, but the point is that his policy worked. It took heed of economic problems, and I believe Lord Beaverbrook was right when he told me that India's problem was an economic problem.

It might be argued that the Lyautey panacea did not work out perpetually in French North Africa. The answer to that hypothetical question is that the present upsurge of Nationalism in French North Africa is by no means unconnected with certain tenacious foreign influences. But to return to India.

During the Indian campaign of Civil Disobedience, the leaders of the movement were by a large majority students, and students who found they had no economic future in India. They were without any difficulty persuaded by Gandhi that this was due entirely to the infamous policy of the British Raj, the same authority that had done so much to educate them. True that not

only Mahatma Gandhi but also Pundit Nehru, a man of infinitely greater intelligence and education, refused to credit the Raj with any constructive policy, material or spiritual, in India. References made to the Lloyd Dam and similar engineering feats of irrigation that had done much to stamp out Famine in India, as well as British led medical enterprise that had reduced cases of plague to a little above zero, met with no response from those two Hindu leaders. The only voice calling attention to the benefits of British rule was the voice of the Aga Khan, but he could be critical enough in semi-private conversation. Before entering into His Highness's criticisms and constructive ideas with regard to Indian affairs, one should pay some attention to the parts the Princes of India were playing until the moment of the change over.

There were 562 Indian States. In 168 of them there were Princes who were rulers in their own right, 127 were minor States with rulers of their own, while 267 were ruled by petty chieftains. In the first category were Princes whose ancestors had conquered or invaded and who were there long before the British; these rulers included Moslems and Hindus of different castes. The forebears of these rulers had thrown in their lot with the British and had been granted their independence. Although they were under the suzerainty of the Indian Government and formed part of the British Empire, they were in the main absolutely independent.

One of the leading Princes was the Moslem Nizam of Hyderabad whose territories covered 82,000 square miles wherein dwelt twelve million people, but though this State was right in the heart of the British Province of Madras, yet His Exalted Highness ruled like an old-time Tsar of Russia. Side by side with Hyderabad was Mysore, where the Maharajah had less than 30,000 square miles of territory and but six million people, yet Mysore was the most modern and enlightened native State in India.

In the West was Baroda, whose ruler in a small State of only 8,000 square miles, and with a population only a little more than two million, lived a life of glittering magnificence and had unbounding wealth and complete independence. Not so his subjects. Also in the West were Nawangar, where the cricketer 'Ranji' once ruled, Indore and Bikanir. The Maharajah of Indore had to flee from India after being dethroned at the urgent request of the Government of India. He married an American girl in Europe.

The power of the Princes did not depend on the size of their territories. The head of the Sikh State of Patiala had only 5,000 square miles and only about a million and a half subjects, but he played a leading if mysterious part in Indian politics. He attended the Round Table Conferences in London, where he appeared to support a policy for the native Princes to take part in a Federation of India. Yet when the Chamber of Princes met in Delhi in the spring of 1932, His Highness's opinions appeared to have undergone changes.

There were good Princes and bad Princes, and many of them were most undoubtedly a bar to progress. In many cases there were known instances of torture and slave labour, cases of men being thrown into dungeons where there were live snakes.

In some States there was enlightenment and progress, but side by side with that there were orgies of licentiousness, money poured out for dancing girls. There were Princes who cared more for their dogs than for their subjects, Princes who thought nothing of chartering special trains to take their dogs away when the heat of their capitals made life intolerable.

In two cases at least a native Prince of one State and a Princess of another led scandalous lives in France. But lest this picture of the Princes becomes out of focus, one must admit that in the main they formed a band of men loyal to their King-Emperor, as their ancestors had been to their first Queen-Empress.

The question may be asked, however, where did the Aga Khan appear in that gallery? The answer is that he did not appear at all, yet his influence could be seen and traced. Perhaps then it was not unnatural that he should become a little restive at what he considered the British Government's lack of recognition of his services, as we shall learn a little later.

In 1903 the Aga Khan was nominated to the Imperial Legislative Council of India. In 1906 he headed the Moslem Deputation to Viceroy Minto. In 1907 he was elected Permanent President of the Moslem League, but he resigned in 1914.

In 1928 the Aga Khan presided over an All-India All Parties Moslem Conference at Delhi, and in 1930–31 he was Chairman of the British Indian Delegation to the Round Table Conference at London.

As important as all these posts were, they do not in themselves give a complete picture of his work, because most of the ideas he had about such matters as Caste Barriers and Federation antedated by some years the public attention they received at the Round Table Conference. His Highness, fortunately or unfortunately, has always been somewhat in advance of his co-peers on Indian affairs.

In 1919, directly after the first World War, there was agitation in India because educated Indians thought that Britain was withholding India's rights to become a full partner in the Commonwealth. In 1917 Mr. Lloyd George had formulated vague but well-sounding promises that India would soon achieve responsible government. In 1919 India was still waiting for the Premier's promises to be implemented. To add to the nervous impatience of the Indians there were troublesome times in South Africa, where Indians were being barred from the rights of citizenship; not only that, they were barred from acquiring land and from working in the gold bearing territories. A large percentage of the affected Indians in South Africa were Ismaili, followers of the Aga

Khan. The Moslems were also affected by Britain's war against Afghanistan. Behind the scenes, with a Mr. Sastri assisting him, the Aga Khan was able in South Africa to do for the Indians what the British Raj was unable to do: to have some of the worst aspects of the South African Government's disabilities against Indians eradicated.

But there were further Indian troubles in East Africa; in Uganda there were stern restrictions against Indians, and here again the Aga Khan had to intervene, but this time with only partial success.

In India itself the pot began to boil over. Gandhi launched his Passive Resistance movement. The Aga Khan tried to reason with him but to no avail. His Highness told the Moslems of India that Passive Resistance could only end in chaos and disorder. The Aga Khan linked his chariot to the Moderate Party of India and gradually he won their confidence but this was not sufficient to kill the Passive Resistance movement. Yet he managed to persuade the Moslem Indians as a whole not to attack the British backed Reform Bill but to work to make these Reforms a success.

Then Gandhi made a political master stroke.

So that nobody should think that the Aga Khan wanted the Caliphate for himself, he had taken no part in the Moslem agitation for its restoration, but Gandhi, the Hindu, stood out for his religious opponents, the Moslems. He told them that the Christian Powers were about to crush Turkey. For a time the Aga Khan seemed isolated from the Moslems of India, but when the Gandhi campaign for non-co-operation with Britain got under way, many leading Moslems joined the Aga Khan in opposing it and gradually they won back Moslem support to themselves, but there was a great intellectual battle at the Aga Khan sponsored University at Aligarh, from which hundreds of students resigned in order to mark their sympathy for

Non-Co-operation. Gradually the students returned to the calmer counsels of the Aga Khan.

The battle against Non-Co-operation went on for ten years. The Aga Khan's head was 'bloody but unbowed'. He appeared to have enjoyed the fight, but as we shall see, after Lord Chelmsford left his Viceregal post and Lord Irwin was appointed Viceroy, the Aga Khan was not so pleased with the policies of the Lord Irwin who is now known as Lord Halifax.

The present Lord Simon, when Sir John Simon, was Chairman of a Statutory Commission that went to India to draft a Report and prepare for Reforms. Gandhi and his followers not only boycotted the Commission but organised opposition to it. The Aga Khan explained to as many Indians as would listen to him that all men of good will should co-operate with the Commission and assist it in preparing a Report. When the Report did appear the Aga Khan was very disappointed with it, but he agreed to go to London for the Round Table Conference. After the first Conference was over and the Delegates returned to India it was seen that Gandhi was bent on ruining the Conference.

Before the second Conference convened, the Aga Khan, who incidentally now had his son, the Ali Khan with him as his secretary, had several private conversations with Premier Ramsay MacDonald and held out high hopes for a settlement of communal difficulties. When the other Delegates arrived in London they met the Aga Khan privately, but despite all efforts, the Round Table Conference was a complete failure. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, had completely surrendered to Congress.

When Lord Irwin was completing his term of office I happened to be at Antibes with the Aga Khan and asked his opinion of the departing Viceroy of India. Stopping abruptly on the Place Macé across which we were walking, His Highness said: 'Irwin has shortened British rule in India by ten . . . no, one must not exaggerate, Irwin has shortened British rule in India by five years.'

The Aga Khan as far back as 1918 had very decided views of caste barriers in India and wrote in part as follows:

'In every part of the world we find a submerged class. In India so widespread is the poverty of the people that, judged by Western standards, an overwhelming majority, and not the outcastes alone, can be described as depressed or submerged. Long familiarity with this all-pervading poverty, however, leads to the application of these terms on the basis not of poverty, but of membership of the untouchable communities. Henceforth, if the task of national improvement and consolidation is to be taken in hand, we must give a wider meaning to the description of "depressed" than that of the mere position of a number of inferior sections in relation to the Hindu caste system.

'A mere hypothesis will make this point clear. We will assume that a great and sudden movement toward social justice led all the Brahman and other castes of Hindu society to receive the outcastes as brothers in faith, and to accept their companionship at gala dinners throughout the land. What would be the position of these unfortunate people on the following day? No doubt the mere fact of acceptance as the social and spiritual equals of high-caste men would bring a sense of exaltation, and there would be a general widening of national sympathy. Yet in the absence of far-reaching economic improvement, the actual position and standard of life of these unfortunate classes would remain very much what it is at present. The general mass would not be better off, though here and there the door of opportunity to rise might be opened, as, for instance, in the occasional marriage of girls to men of the higher castes.

'Even to-day the generalisation that an outcaste cannot escape from his "birth's invidious bar" requires qualification. Whatever the legal disabilities of the depressed classes may have been when India was a purely Hindu society, for centuries past the power of strictly legal prevention of obtaining a better social position

religious and social system under Brahman domination; for it is not to be forgotten that there are many families belonging to the higher castes, sometimes even Brahmans, whose average condition of life is no better than that of the hereditary unfortunates.

'It is well known that many members of the depressed classes improve their socio-economic position by embracing Christianity. What does the missionary do to and for the convert besides baptising him? Very often he is taught to read and write not only the vernaculars, but English. From childhood in Christian families cleanliness and the general laws of health are impressed on him and his. A boy of aptitude is placed in the way of learning, and he may rise, not only to teaching and preaching, but to other learned professions. When such advantages are within reach of each "untouchable" family, economic forces will operate so to raise the backward communities, that, in spite of the prejudices of Brahman orthodoxy, the social position of many of its members will approximate to the level of that of the highest castes. The Brahman could still object, on caste grounds, to intermarriage or intimate social relations with a successful Pariah. Though a religious basis is claimed, the exclusiveness of the Brahman mainly arises from social prejudice. Until within recent years the same attitude of mind was common in Europe. Two or three generations ago a successful Jew was as much an object of aversion on the part of the average country squire in England as a successful Sudra is to the Brahman. In Germany to this day Jews and certain urban classes are looked upon with undisguised social prejudice by the rural gentry. If the economic position of the "untouchable" in India is raised and educational diffusion gives him equality of opportunity with his neighbours, caste prejudice will not be able to depress him or condemn him to treatment any worse than that which was meted to the Jew even in England within living memory.

'When all is said, however, there is no running away from the

seriousness and urgency of the task of economic and social amelioration. The only object of my preliminary warnings against the assumption that the mere abrogation of caste rules would effect this reformation, is to emphasise the need for dealing with the problem from every point of view. The patriot and the social reformer must not be content to run after the will-o'-the-wisp of a religious merging, instead of doing the spade work necessary for educational, economic, and social improvement. There is no single short road to that amelioration of the lot of the Pariah which is essential to the upbuilding of Indian nationhood. Concentration of effort on the removal of the more important causes of backwardness is called for, side by side with the devotion and energy of the individual to the cause of his less fortunate neighbours, before we can hope to achieve marked progress.

'First and foremost, because more important than any other single agency, must be the adoption of a national policy of betterment. Under the influence of the Manchester school, theories of the need for strict limitation of State agency were fashionable in mid-Victorian times; in our day, and after the experience of the last four years in particular, the matter is *res adjudicata*. A good many years have passed by since Sir William Harcourt declared, "We are all Socialists now." The immense development of communications, the necessity for controlling the conditions of labour, the need for raising money at rates which only the credit of the State can command for the purpose not only of defence but also of reproductive public works—these and other factors attest the recognition by all advanced communities that the moral and material development of the people is one of the main duties of the State. That even amid the clash of arms a Ministry of Health is being set up in the United Kingdom, is a forcible reminder that in the most advanced countries the trend of modern society is toward making health, in the widest sense of the term, whether by the study of eugenical

improvements or by intensive culture of the individual, the cardinal pursuit of the commonwealth.

'The province state of to-morrow, with its strong and permanent executive, under a Governor whose main business and duty will be to keep his eyes open for every possible improvement, with its large and popular assembly representing all classes and conditions of the people, must take in hand these problems of general improvement, of raising the standard of health and comfort. It has previously been shown how far free and compulsory education for all, and including physical culture, will go to make it impossible for the population of to-morrow to accept the present condition of life of the depressed classes.

'These classes must be represented in each provincial legislature. Wherever possible they should return their own representatives; where, in the earlier stages of progress, they are so backward as to make this impracticable, it will be for the Governor to nominate their leaders for the time being. When their political equality is constitutionally recognised, they will themselves gain social self-confidence, and soon by unconscious stages realise their responsibility toward and value to the commonwealth. Such measures as civil marriage bills will be required in each province. Other measures of social justice will be an indirect result of the recognition in political representation of the legitimate place in the nation of classes without whose humble toil communal life as a whole could not be maintained.

'Our main reliance on State action to improve the conditions of life of all the backward elements, whether technically belonging to the depressed classes or not, must lead to no neglect of the great opportunities on every side for voluntary social service. The Christian missionaries have set an example in this respect of what can be achieved by a body of devoted men acting in concert. The Indian Christian community had been doubled in the last three decennial periods ending with the census of 1911, and now

represents about one and one-quarter per cent of the entire population; and this is due far less to natural increase than to the constant accession to its ranks of members of the depressed classes. Further, since 1911 there has been a developing tendency to mass movements towards Christianity, one of the perplexing problems of the missionary bodies being to make due provision for the reception and education of whole villages desiring enrolment. Though there may be natural regret on the part of educated Indians that people of their own religions are absorbed by a foreign communion, there can be no denying that the social and economic improvement which the missions bring to the poorest of the poor is a great and beneficent work. It calls for Indian sympathy, and still more for Indian imitation.

'In early life I thought that the noblest ideal for an Indian Mohammedan of means or influence was to work for the education of his Islamic brethren. For many years now I have held the view that a still greater and nobler work awaits the Indian Moslem. That is the organisation throughout the country—I will not say of "missions", because of the mainly proselytising associations of the word—but of mutual help associations on a national scale, for improving the condition of the depressed classes, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Everyone with influence among them should earnestly pray that the Moslems may have the grace to recognise the need for this labour of love. Since the highest recognition of brotherhood and fellow-citizenship can only come by accepting intermarriage, at any rate in the present social conditions of India, the Mohammedans would be justified in advancing their religious views amongst those members of the backward classes who were thus brought into touch with them for the work of common regeneration.

'The most fitting and important agency, however, for this beneficent task is that of the higher castes among the Hindus themselves, and this has been recognised to some extent by the

work in recent years of Hindu missions, especially in Bombay, under the influence of Gokhale and Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. No statement to which the former gave expression was more pertinent to the duty he enjoined both by practice and precept than that the problem of Indian progress is, in the last resort, the problem of raising the Indian average of character and efficiency. What the Christian missionary and the Mohammedans can do on a relatively small scale, must here become the most insistent and widespread voluntary work of the most numerous portion of the nation. With high-caste Hindus, as with Mohammedans, religious propaganda, the results of which are so often embittering and narrowing, should not be the inspiring motive, but rather the giving of a helping hand to fellow countrymen in trouble whose depression is a serious handicap to the general progress of the Motherland.

'If the work is to be effective, it will be necessary to recognise the claims of social equality wherever this is possible, and to remove the embargoes on intermarriage between different sections. The various voluntary organisations, which might also comprise men of other faiths, such, for instance, as the Buddhists, would work in friendly rivalry, not with the mere object of increasing their own numbers by a few thousands, but with that of bettering the social position of the most backward, with a view to realising a common progressive nationality. In the immense fields of secondary and higher education, of special scholarships, and of widening opportunity for artistic and spiritual cultivation, and of facilitating intermarriage between the different classes—these and other ameliorative agencies will give wide scope for the voluntary energy and patriotism of Hindu, Mohammedan, and Christian alike, when the State fulfils the primary duties of universal elementary education and of due sanitary provision.'

In ordinary conversation on matters concerning India His Highness expresses himself with greater force and vigour and in

more homely language. Such an occasion occurred when I was visiting him at Cimiez, near Nice. The Statutory Commission had just returned from India, and the Aga Khan was very forthright about what had happened.

'What do you think now of the future of British rule in India?' I asked him. This was in 1929.

'British rule at present is too centralised,' he said. 'Of course, I do not know what will be found in the Report, but unless the findings of the Commission are based on an association or federation of Indian Free States, which I'll explain in a minute, then God help them. They will simply be reaping Dead Sea fruit.

'As you know, I recently returned from India where I succeeded in uniting seventy million Moslems on a political basis. It was not a new Moslem party that I created, but rather a reuniting of an old party.

'Our aims are purely political. The religious differences separating the various sects of Mohammedans exist and will exist for all time as far as we can foresee.

'The time has come for India to be organised on national lines. We want to see the creation of an association of free Indian States within the framework of the British Empire, but an association that will be equal to the other units of the British Empire as it exists at present.

'There should be between twenty and thirty Indian States, each one with military and economic freedom, but each of these States with a British Governor and with a British Viceroy directing the association or federation, whichever you like to call it.

'I cannot do better to explain my meaning than to ask people to remember the German Empire as it was before the Great War when Bavaria, although part and parcel of that Empire, had perfect military and economic freedom. I know and realise that it will require a man of great courage and resource to bring about this change of government, and perhaps Edwin Montagu might

have been able to do this had it not been for his untimely death. But even Montagu was scared by what happened in Bengal.

'The majority of the Indian people wholeheartedly desire the change I have outlined to you, but there is a certain amount of inertia in India which will have to be overcome. The present trouble in India between the Moslems and the Hindus will eventually disappear if they, as well as other Indian nationals, are organised as nationalistic States on historical and linguistic foundations.

'With regard to Communism, Communism always fishes in troubled waters. One must, therefore, distinguish between legitimate agitation and that which is being sponsored by the Communists. We have very great poverty in India, but this poverty cannot be overcome by charity, however well meant; nor by Lord Mayors' Funds, no matter how laudable their offering. But it can be overcome by the development of Agricultural Colleges and the assistance to and the encouragement of agriculture.'

On this occasion the Aga Khan ceased talking about India for a moment to talk about King George V, who had recently recovered from a severe illness.

'Do you know,' said the Aga Khan, 'I think the King is the most hard-working man in the British Empire. I have known scores of other rulers as well as the heads of big business concerns but I know of no other man who regards his job with such attachment and devotion. It should never be forgotten that the person of the British Sovereign is the bond of union not only between the great white Dominions and England, but between all the non-British races in the Empire and the white section.

'Bismarck used to say that he could get through his job by working five minutes a day. Perhaps that was a boast, but King George reads every line and every word of every document brought to him for signature.'

Conversations with the Aga Khan about India have frequently begun at Longchamps after the Sunday afternoon races. We would begin to walk towards Paris, through the Bois, talking all the time until we reached a spot where the Aga Khan had told his chauffeur to meet him with his car. Then we would have tea in Paris and continue talking.

One such conversation took place back in May, 1922, when His Highness had just returned from India. He was particularly angry. He said: 'The Moslems have turned away from British rule. You can only remain in India as long as India wills but you cannot govern India by giving one man a Garter and putting another one in prison.' He then attacked Allied policy in Turkey and said that the Sultan was merely a puppet of the Allied Army of occupation. Then he began again to talk about India, saying that Edwin Montagu's resignation had been forced because of his friendliness towards the Moslems, a feeling that Mr. Montagu shared with Lord Reading. The Aga Khan said he distrusted the Esher Commission on the Army in India and he protested against the employment of India troops in other Asiatic countries for indefinite periods. But when in the mood His Highness will write down his thoughts as he did about a Federal India. He wrote, in part, as follows:

'No federal scheme for India can be complete or satisfactory if it leaves out of account the Indian States, which cover one-third of the area of the Indian Empire and contain some seventy million inhabitants, or two-ninths of the entire population. It is therefore necessary to deal with them before discussing the constitution of the central authority.

'It is a familiar though often forgotten fact that these principalities vary in size, climate, density of population, economic, racial, and intellectual conditions to an extraordinary degree. There are great dominions, such as Hyderabad, Mysore, and Kashmir, worthy to rank with kingdoms in Europe. The Nizam

of Hyderabad is the equal in power, in dominion, in the number of his subjects, and in the variety of interests to be considered, with the Kings of Belgium or Roumania. Indeed, just as the German Emperor has kings within his dominions, and as we hope some day the independent sovereigns of Persia and Afghanistan will, of their own free will, wish to enter the future South Asiatic Confederation, so, *prima facie* there is every reason why the Nizam should, like the former Kings of Oudh, receive the royal title of "Majesty", a concomitant act being the rendition to him of the Berars. A step forward was taken on New Year's Day, 1918, when he was given the special title of "Faithful Ally of the British Government", and the style, new to India, of "His Exalted Highness". This designation is strangely reminiscent of the old Dutch style of "High Mightiness", which was proposed for the President of the United States, but refused by Washington.

'Then there are States not so vast in extent where, by intensive culture, commerce and trade have reached such a development as to make them the equals of the richest British districts in India. Some of the principalities go back in tradition and history to the very dawn of civilised society. There are Rajput States, the germs of which must have existed when Alexander encamped on the banks of the Indus, and it is not improbable that orderly governments, under the ancestors or collaterals of some of the present Rajput Princes, were carried on in the eras of Caesar and Augustus. Other principalities, again, date in present form from the early days of British rule, and in some cases were obtained by purchase or by other equally unromantic forms of acquisition from English officials, reluctant to accept further direct responsibility for Indian government. But whether ancient or comparatively new, the individual variations of these autonomous territories are of absorbing interest. Large dominions, like those of Baroda and Gwalior, possess a unity of history and sentiment

attaching them to their ruling houses, from which, especially in the case of their present heads, they have received such devoted service as to have established between prince and people a relation almost tribal in the strength of its affection. There are smaller States, such as Kapurthala and Bhavanagar, which are excellent examples of hereditary good government and contentment of the people.

'Amid the diversities I have indicated, there is an all embracing link of profound attachment to the British Crown. Not only through this vast war, but on many previous occasions, in almost every frontier expedition, in China, in Africa, and elsewhere, the Princes have proved their devotion to the British Empire, and have made sacrifices such as to win for them the merited title of partners therein. In the last four years they have been enabled, by freewill gifts and sacrifices, to share in the great task of securing a victory for the allies to an extent which has evoked general admiration and has vastly raised the scale of India's contribution as a whole. Their well-trained Imperial Service contingents, maintained by the Durbars for a generation past, formed an invaluable contribution to the military units in being when war broke out, and the stream of recruitment from the States has enormously helped to meet the pressing need for repair of the heavy wastages of war.

'Looking back on the 150 years of British predominance in India, 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 Indian States into British India. It came to relieve the fears and anxieties aroused, with unhappy results, by the Dalhousian policy of "lapse". Had that policy been vetoed at the time by the Government in Whitehall, I am firmly convinced that Britain's position in India to-day would have been all the stronger, for the existence of Oudh, Nagput, Satara, and

the other sequestered principalities. The aggregate territory from which British Indian revenues are derived would have been less vast, and I do not deny that there would have been some other disadvantages, of a temporary character, but these would have been altogether outweighed.

'The administrative machinery of British India, now so great and cumbrous, would have been simplified; British rule would have had in those directly concerned sure and honest friends like the Princes of to-day, and there would have been a correspondingly larger measure of indigenous government, with all its advantages, side by side with British administration. The builders of United Germany, from Bismarck downwards, have borne witness that the diversified principalities are the mainstay of that Empire, and that destructive anarchy has no more powerful antagonist than a dynasty belonging to the soil, ruling from age to age relatively small areas within a confederation.

'It is not too much to say that to-day the Indian Princes are the bulwarks of the Imperial connection. I have sometimes met Indians, whose names, of course, I can never mention even in private, actuated by bitter hatred of England, and whose absorbing idea was to cut the painter. On one point they were all agreed: that the existence of the Indian States made an unsuperable barrier to the success of their childish ambition, and it was always with bitter regret that they referred to these principalities.

'From the point of view of good administration these areas of indigenous rule, scattered like so many islands of varying size in the sea of British India, are advantageous both to their own inhabitants and to those of surrounding districts. They provide suitable fields for administrative experiments such as could not be applied, without prior test, to the whole of British India. Some States advance the cause of social reform by enactments and orders which English administrators, conscious of their

limitations as non-indigenous officials adhering to the principle of strict religious neutrality, have not dared to apply.

'In some services for the common weal, such as education and sanitation, there are respects in which the most progressive States are ahead of British India. But it would be unfair to fail to recognise that the stimulus to advancement is reciprocal. The high standard of British justice, to give but one instance, calls for emulation, as is recognised by almost every State. Here and there are to be found principalities in which the administration of justice and general civil policy leave much to be desired; but happily, with the spread of modern ideals, these have become rare exceptions. Religious liberty prevails in the States as well as in British India. A Moslem ruler, like the Nizam of Hyderabad, is respected and loved by his millions of Hindu subjects, while there are Hindu Princes, such as the Maharajas of Gwalior and Kolapur (to mention only two names), whose Mohammedan subjects look upon them with almost filial affection and veneration, and who constantly prove that, if Hindus in faith, they are superior as rulers to all sectarian or other narrowing influences.

'Again, these indigenous Courts scattered over the great peninsula are the fitting patrons of art in every form. Indian music, architecture, painting, and the arts generally, have natural protectors and patrons in the various Durbars. It is not improbable that within the present century some of the dynasties may produce patrons of art as influential as the Medicis, or the Princes of Weimar. Some special branches of higher agriculture receive encouragement from the Princes, and in many other directions they give a remarkable impetus to the upbuilding of an expanded Indian life, responsive to modern ideas, yet distinctive of the country and its peoples.

'Increasingly, of late years, some of the best-known Princes have been cherishing the ideal of a constitutional and parliamentary basis for their administrations. There can be no doubt

that a liberal policy in British India will soon be followed in many of the States by widening applications of the principle of co-operation between the rulers and the ruled. It is most gratifying to Indian patriots to note the sympathy which the Princes and nobles have shown with the aspirations of the people of British India toward self-government. After all, these rulers, unlike the small dynasties of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Italy, are children of the soil and have a natural sympathy and fellow-feeling with their countrymen.

'There could be no better or more convincing presentation of these aspirations of India, in brief compass, than that given by the Maharaja of Bikanir, in his historic pronouncement at the luncheon of the Empire Parliamentary Association to the Indian delegates to the Imperial War Conference, at the House of Commons, on 24th April, 1917. Those of us who personally know the ruling Princes of to-day—so active, hardworking, patriotic and devoted to the welfare of their people, usually so free from all "side", and, in a word, so different from the legendary maharaja of the imaginative writers of the past—have no reason to doubt that this eloquent plea voiced not only the views of the educated people of India but also those of the average ruling chief. In fact, His Highness of Bikanir spoke on similar lines to his brother Princes when they entertained him to dinner in Bombay on the eve of his departure for the Imperial War Conference. It may also be noted that the Maharaja of Alwar's speeches, so full of democratic enthusiasm, have made a considerable impression in India within the last two or three years.

'The States cannot be mere spectators of the constitutional changes now impending. The question arises: "What is the part they are to play in the politically free India of to-morrow?" To reduce them gradually to the mere position of great nobles, and to let the power and the individuality attaching to their States pass out of their control would be a crime against history,

art, and even nationality. On the other hand, the present standard of relations between the protecting Power and the protected State cannot go on after British India reaches the first stages toward self-government. What is the solution? Happily, in federalism we find a system that will meet the need both of British India and of the Indian States. It has been maintained in these pages that a successful unilateral form of self-government is impossible even for British India. The great provincial administrators, we have seen, must be autonomous in internal matters. The interference of the central authority, while necessary in the past, must be metamorphosed into that entire non-intervention in State as distinct from Imperial affairs which characterises the Imperial Government of Germany or the United States Government in their dealings with the members of their respective confederations. A similar policy should at once be applied to the Indian principalities.

'The central federal authority, by promoting happiness, contentment, and development within its vast territories and over such an immense population, would sooner or later attract its neighbours in Northern and Western Asia. The benefits of federalism would soon be felt, since it would give a stimulus to progress which present conditions of centralisation discourage and retard. At the periodical Imperial Conferences in London, the representatives of Canada, Australia, and the other great Dominions, would meet those who would voice the claims of an immense Indian Federation built on the rock of national autonomy in each of its living members. They would represent an organic whole which, in very truth, would be a living and vital entity with common interests, looked after by a federal Government and a strong Imperial Executive supervised by the Emperor's representative, the Viceroy, and his Prime Minister and Cabinet, and supported by the Federal Council representing all provinces and principalities.

'Responsible government, in the narrow and technical sense in which Mr. Montagu's announcement is being interpreted in some quarters, has been really successful alone in the United Kingdom, and there only up to a certain point. In England the two-party system, quite inconceivable in India, was held years ago by no less a judge of constitutional history than Bagehot to have been the real cause of the success of this form of government. But in the words of a competent observer to-day "the breakdown of Parliamentary government, which had become increasingly acute in the years preceding the war, was due to the fact that the British people had persisted in attempting in one Parliament and with one executive to deal with three classes of business", viz.—Imperial affairs; questions affecting the United Kingdom as a whole; and the internal affairs of the three countries. Under the stress of war conditions, many of the traditional elements of responsibility of the executive to Parliament are in suspense.

'In France, where, for historical reasons, there are many parties, this principle has led to unstable guidance and constant changes in ministries, and has brought to the front in public life a kaleidoscopic crowd of individuals instead of a few outstanding national characters. France is a very great nation, but a sincere admirer who loves her almost as a foster-mother country may be allowed to say that she is great in spite of her governmental system. Sympathetic students of the French Constitution, such as Mr. Bodley, and passionate French patriots, such as M. Déroulède, have regretted that the immediate fear of Caesarism led the founders of the Third Republic to adopt the English model instead of that of the other great Anglo-Saxon State.

'It would be a disaster for India to be forced into the narrow form of constitutionalism that developed with its essential condition of two great rival parties, in England through historical and natural causes, but is now confessedly in need of reform. Mere imitation of features of the British Constitution has had most

disillusioning results in the Iberian Peninsula and in Greece. It is true that a form of responsibility to parliament has succeeded in the Northern States of Europe; but here it must be remembered that in Sweden, the most important of the three Scandinavian Governments, the system is a half-way house between responsibility as understood in England, and the German practice of separation of powers as between the executive and the legislative bodies.

'Constitutional government has succeeded only where it has been cast in a form natural to the history and development of the people. In America, with all fidelity to democratic principles, it has taken forms widely different from those of Great Britain. In Japan, also, it is in practice anything but a slavish imitation of the English methods. Indeed, it is nearer to the Swedish than to any other system existing in the West. In Germany and Austria it approaches the American system, though the partition between the executive and the legislature is not so marked.

'Why should India be forced to imitate a system of government evolved through many centuries in a geographically small country with two historical parties? Why should India be placed on this Procrustean bed, instead of allowing the more widely elected legislature and an executive with a century and a half of tradition behind it to develop naturally their own inner working, just as they have been evolved in other countries? We want self-government, we want responsible government in the widest sense of the word—that of ultimate responsibility to the people—but we do not want our nascent national institutions to be put into swaddling clothes because one word instead of another was chosen by the British War Cabinet for its public declaration. The Indian peoples with an instinctive sense of their need, have asked for self-government within the Empire, not for Parliamentary institutions on the British model. None of the draft schemes prepared by Indians from that of Gokhale to the joint

representation of the National Congress and the Moslem League, hypothecate full and immediate responsibility of the executive to the legislature.

'It is an unfair and prejudiced criticism of the federal form of government to argue that the free provincial parliaments will be nothing but glorified municipalities. Surely autonomy for our great provinces, with populations of from twenty to fifty millions, with their vast and varied lands, each equal in natural resources to one of the greatest European States, is a sufficient field for the ambition and devotion of any patriot. It must be remembered that as true federalists we advocate for the government of each of the great province-states the same measure of ultimate internal independence from the central authorities as is now enjoyed by the Nizam or the Rajput Princes over their own territories.

'This brings me to the first of two questions I wish to put to the critics of federalism as here advocated. By what other system can the Indian States be brought into active union with the rest of India? No scheme of reconstruction can be complete without taking into consideration the 70,000,000 people and the 710,000 square miles comprised within these areas scattered all over India. Can these lands remain permanently out of touch with the great reconstructed India of the future? Or, as an alternative, are we to tear up treaties that assured their Princes full autonomy within their respective spheres? Or is it seriously maintained that the central Government, while scrupulously avoiding interference in any question relating to a tiny principality or its courts, should at the same time control the great province-states from Simla or Delhi, as if they were nothing but so many territories occupied by superior forces? The history of the past, no less than the justice and symmetry to be sought to-day, leads to the conclusion that we need a federation which can be entered by the greatest provinces and the smallest Indian Raj alike without loss of

internal freedom, and yet with the assurance that, in all federal matters, they will pull together for a united Empire.

'It is common ground with students of Indian affairs that a State like Mysore should have full control of internal policy. If this principle holds good of an essentially non-democratic régime, why should it not apply to our great national states, where legislative and financial control is finally vested in a representative assembly, and where the immovable executive is strong enough to carry out measures of justice and utility?

'The second question for the advocate of a unilateral system to ponder is that of the effect on the international future in Asia. An outstanding tendency in the political ferment of to-day is for small nations, while retaining their individuality, to gather to a central, powerful State that carries them along in a common course. In recent years the United States have drawn into their orbit many of the smaller entities of the New World, such as Cuba and the republics of Central America. Germany has Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria ranged with her, and she is ambitious to secure within her sphere of influence the States that have been surrendered through the Bolshevist betrayal of Russia. She dreams of ultimately bringing Holland and Flanders, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and even Switzerland within her constellation.

'England and France and Italy have now taken a common route in world politics, carrying with them many wide-flung dominions. Even the three Scandinavian monarchies, free as they ordinarily are from the bewildering entanglements of world politics, have found that practical independence can only be maintained by greater union and cohesion. We have to-day, in fact, a common North European policy, into which the new Republic of Finland longs to be drawn. It has been ruthlessly invaded because it forms a barrier to Teutonic ambitions in North-Western Europe. But the most competent observers are

agreed that whatever changes peace may bring, Germany will not turn away her eyes from Middle Asia.

'It is for the Indian patriot to recognise that Persia, Afghanistan, and possibly Arabia must sooner or later come within the orbit of some Continental Power—such as Germany, or what may grow out of the break-up of Russia—or must throw in their lot with that of the Indian Empire, with which they have so much more genuine affinity. The world forces that move small states into closer contact with powerful neighbours, though so far most visible in Europe, will inevitably make themselves felt in Asia. Unless she is willing to accept the prospect of having powerful and possibly inimical neighbours to watch, and the heavy military burdens thereby entailed, India cannot afford to neglect to draw her Mohammedan neighbour states to herself by the ties of mutual interest and goodwill.

'A lesson of the Great War that even Germany has been reluctantly compelled to recognise is that force, though remorselessly applied by her military leaders, is insufficient to secure the incorporation of weakened nations. In Courland, in Lithuania, in Flanders herself, German policy has wavered between merciless severity and efforts to win the hearts of such elements of the population as the Flemings and the Baltes to her *kultur* and interests. British policy ought to have no such conflict of ideals. Hence it is unthinkable that the British Empire can pursue a course of mere conquest in the Middle East. Such a policy is foreign to her ideals and repugnant to her interests. It would be more disastrous for England and India than almost anything else I can conceive, for it would mean the violation of the principles of humanity and justice, and would provoke continued unrest. On the other hand, a merely negative attitude will not meet the dangers I have indicated. We must have a policy attractive enough to draw toward our centre State the outer nations. A system of federation, just to each member, united by ties of

common interest, would serve as a magnet for them. It would be a great harbour light for any weak state of the Middle East.

'Once the internal federation was complete and the economic influence northwards and westwards developed, we might expect the Afghans themselves to seek association therein. The fact that Bengal and Bombay, Hyderabad and Kashmir were enjoying full autonomy, would be a guarantee to the Afghans of no risk of loss of independence in entering the federation. Just as the indigenous rulers of Rajputna would have their place, there is no reason why a group of principalities from Arabia and the Southern littoral of the Persian Gulf should not ultimately become members of the union that will ensure peace and liberty, freedom and order to the south of Asia. Subsequently, Persia herself would be attracted, and just as the natural pride of Bavaria or Saxony has not been diminished by inclusion within the German Union, so, on a greater and more difficult but happily beneficent basis, the empire of Persia and the kingdom of Afghanistan could honourably enter a federation of which Delhi would be the centre.

'Needless to say, no compulsion, direct or indirect, can be employed. The right course is to institute such a type of community of states as to draw the sympathy and practical interest of India's neighbours. The magnet would attract, as time went on, the isolated and remote lands of Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet. The Crown Colony of Ceylon naturally and historically belongs to India. She is cut off from the mainland by a mere geological accident, and the shallow channels and intermittent rocks that divide her therefrom are already partly, and will be completely, bridged by the Indo-Ceylon Railway. A unilateral government of India could have no attraction for the people of the island. They would naturally prefer being governed from Whitehall rather than Delhi, for Whitehall, being so much further away, interferes less, while the Parliamentary institutions of England

afford Ceylon guarantees in normal times against injustice and needless mandates from without. The autonomous system would give the *coup de grâce* to the pleas put forward from time to time for the separation of Burma from the Indian Empire, which spring from dissatisfaction with the present centralised control.

'In a word, the path of beneficent and growing union must be based on a federal India, with every member exercising her individual rights, her historic peculiarities and natural interests, yet protected by a common defensive system and customs union from external danger and economic exploitation by stronger forces. Such a federal India would promptly bring Ceylon to the bosom of her natural mother, and the further developments we have indicated would follow. We can build a great South Asiatic federation by now laying the foundations wide and deep on justice, on liberty, and on recognition for every race, every religion, and every historical entity.'

But this dream of many years was not to be fulfilled. Historians half a century hence may be able to tell us whether the world in general and India in particular would have fared better if it had been possible to build up 'a federation or an association, whichever you like to call it', as the Aga Khan said and wrote, instead of the structural alterations that did take place. It is not surprising that events left him a somewhat embittered and disillusioned man, but he has done his best to hide his disappointment. Throughout his long career as an Indian statesman he told the Moslem people that they owed a duty and loyalty to the country in which they lived; to the Indian Moslems this meant, as indeed it did to millions outside India, loyalty to the British Crown. How far from that path of loyalty the present trend of Indian politics will take both Hindu and Moslem it is not yet possible to say, but it is evident that the Moslem world, the world in which the Aga Khan was born, is moving away from the West, the world in which the Aga Khan appears to prefer to dwell. Yet, when

confronted with the possibility of India one day becoming a Republic, the Aga Khan meets the suggestion with a smile. Just before India received Dominion status, His Highness was in Durban, South Africa, where he gave an interview to a reporter from the *Natal Daily News*, who asked him: 'Once India is given Dominion status, will she use this as a stepping stone to the establishing of a republic?' To which the Aga Khan replied:

'Tell me the difference between six and half a dozen. I believe that once India is given Dominion status, under which you get real independence, it will please the people and the Princes of India, too. For this reason I don't think there will be a republic. They will be satisfied with Dominion status, provided it is on the same basis as that which Canada enjoys.'

Events proved His Highness's forecast to be entirely incorrect. Even during British rule in India there was a strong Republican movement in Bengal. It is difficult, therefore, to follow the Aga Khan's facile optimism, although perhaps it provided an example of how easy it is, even for a man of his eminence, to lose contact with vital problems. India was not by any means content with Dominion status, but her present status as an embryo Republic, while not being inconsistent with Dominion status *de jure*, nevertheless gives sufficient grounds for disquiet in perhaps a not so very remote future.

But with the passing of time the Aga Khan's political inclinations appeared to edge away from the essential British view he had, despite occasional outspoken criticism, consistently supported.

November 6th, 1951, the Aga Khan wrote a letter to *The Times*, objecting to certain phrases that newspaper had used in a leading article on Islam. His Highness wrote that he agreed with Islamic nationalistic aspirations and said that if the West wanted better relations with the Moslems 'the solution lies in their own hands.'

A few months earlier, 2nd August, 1951, the Aga Khan wrote to *The Times* from the Ritz Hotel, London, concerning India's relations with Pakistan. Although no constructive criticism was made, one gathered the impression that His Highness would have welcomed an opportunity to have given counsel and advice.

Earlier in 1951, in February, it was announced that the Aga Khan had collected £5 million to start a jute mill in East Pakistan, a mill in which he made a personal investment of £200,000. The £5 million was collected in Karachi, the city in which His Highness was born.

It was during this same month of February, however, that the Aga Khan had a furious quarrel with the Government of Pakistan.

In the sub-Continent of India there are 222 languages. The Government of Pakistan decided that Urdu was to be the official language. The Aga Khan said 'No', it was to be Arabic. His Highness had arranged to make a speech setting out his point of view, but he fell ill and was running a temperature of 101 deg. F. So the speech was not delivered, but instead His Highness had copies typed and delivered to the Pakistan newspapers. The sequel must have given His Highness a shock. He was attacked on all sides and in high dudgeon flew away to Persia, the home of his ancestors.

CHAPTER XIV

AN OLD LADY SHOWS HER METTLE

THE BONDS OF affection between the Aga Khan and his mother, Lady Ali Shah, closely resembled the bonds linking the late Lord Northcliffe with his mother, Mrs. Harmsworth. Both sons were not only devoted to their mothers but both paid constant tribute to the debts they owed them; both Lord Northcliffe and the Aga Khan were in constant touch with their mothers, and in the case of His Highness he never allowed a week to pass without writing to her and cabling her.

All her long life Lady Ali Shah was an extremely active woman, right down to the end, in 1938, when at the age of ninety she died in Baghdad. She was not only mentally active but she was physically active. She lived a frugal life, indulging much in prayer and fasting at her house, Land's End, Bombay, but she thought nothing at all of riding on a mule for hundreds and hundreds of miles. At the age of eighty she travelled overland from Baghdad and through Persia. On this occasion she showed her utter contempt for authority when that authority did not please her. When permission to make this journey was accorded her there was a condition made: that she should take a number of leaflets with her and distribute them as she proceeded on her way.

Lady Ali Shah took the leaflets with her, but she burned them.

Although for several decades Lady Ali Shah had made her home in India and lived to all intents and purposes as an Indian lady, nevertheless her heart was in Persia. By birth she was a Shiah, one of the Moslem sects which, in the course of time, became merged with the Ismailis. As has been explained, she was the mainspring of the Aga Khan's Welfare State; she made it work, but nevertheless it was her earnest desire that her son

should pay frequent visits to India, not necessarily to see her, but to see his own people. Although once she did declare: 'If my son chooses to remain in Europe, then it pleases me, I shall always be very proud of him,' it was just that very question of staying in Europe and not returning to India that made her undertake the longest journey of her life.

When Lady Ali Shah was eighty-four years old she made up her mind that if her son would not come home, then she would have to go and fetch him. She had to be almost forcibly restrained from making the long journey from Bombay to London by air, quite a change from her usual muleback transport, when she travelled accompanied by two girl secretaries. Finally she consented to travel by sea. In London she stayed with her grandson Ali Khan. It was while staying at this house in the heart of Mayfair that this grand old lady from the East gave an interview to a representative of a London Sunday newspaper. Lady Ali Shah had to speak through an interpreter of course. She is reported to have said on 16th October, 1932: 'I have never seen a horse-race. Fortune has always smiled on my son, but I know nothing about my son's racing, although I do know that he has always been wonderfully lucky. We of the East are fatalists, but I think his particular star must have been in the ascendant when my son was born.

'As a child he was always lucky even in his boyish games, then as he grew up, good fortune seemed to journey with him.

'He always loved horses. My son's luck has never deserted him. Fate had smiled generously upon him, but in his good fortune he has always been good to others. He never forgets those less fortunate than himself.'

Speaking of his then wife, the Begum Andrée, Lady Ali Shah is reported to have said: 'She is my son's choice. If he loves her, then it is enough for me.'

It would seem then that the question of her son's return to

India was not the only difference of opinion between Lady Ali Shah and the Aga Khan. He always derides such things as Luck and will not accept any suggestion that he is a lucky man, but it would seem, according to her alleged statement, that his mother did not agree.

In the Spring of 1932 Lady Ali Shah was presented at Court. It is a great pity that no record exists of her opinions of such proceedings and what her thoughts were on being presented to her Sovereign, the grandson of Queen Victoria to whom she had sent her son some thirty-five years previously.

At the end of the London season the Aga Khan departed as was his wont to Deauville, where as ever he was to take part in the gay festivities at that delectable Normandy resort. As usual, the Aga Khan had his villa. Now Lady Ali Shah had her villa at Deauville, close to her son and grandson. Probably it meant little to be there among the rotagravure set; it was merely a question of saying her prayers there or elsewhere. In the mornings His Highness, after attending to his urgent mail, would play golf. Then there would be lunch, his rest, the races, tea, more mail. Then dressing for dinner and, later, the Casino until the early hours of the following morning. The Ali Khan would be moving in the same orbit, but the Lady Ali Shah would not be among those present. She would be at home, praying, fasting—and waiting. One could imagine her saying: 'Time to come home now, my son.' Not home to the Deauville villa naturally, but home to Mother India.

Whether or not, as he told Miss Blain, his secretary, he was afraid of his mother, the truth is that at last he did pay a visit to India, just as his mother intended that he should.

In February, 1936, the late Sir Oswald Birley, M.C., considered to be Britain's most famous portrait painter, went to Bombay to paint Lady Ali Shah. Sir Oswald had painted the Aga Khan in Antibes, in April, 1935.

Sir Oswald painted Lady Ali Shah, so he told me, in her house on the sea, outside Bombay. The Aga Khan was staying there at the time but he never interrupted the sittings which his mother took very seriously indeed. This was in the house where the late Edwin Montagu visited her about twenty years previously, when he described it as being full of beautiful Persian china. Mr. Montagu related that he was the first male, with the exception of Viceroy Lord Willingdon, that Lady Ali Shah (then a woman of more than sixty) had ever received socially. Now here she was sitting to a fashionable portrait painter.

She was painted in full Oriental costume, with multi-hued gauze trousers and white linen sari, sitting on a couch, with a narghile, a hubble-bubble pipe, by her right side.

An old Indian lady, an interpreter, was always present, 'but,' said Sir Oswald, 'the only time she spoke was to say "Her Highness will now go and say her prayers"; upon which the old lady dismounted from her couch and did not return again that day, so it was a matter of no little difficulty to tell how long the sitting was likely to last, but as she was so good while she was actually there, I was able to make progress while the sittings did last.'

The Aga Khan was quite a different proposition. 'While I was painting him,' said Sir Oswald, 'more often than not his secretary, Miss Blain, would be reading his letters to him and taking down his answers. When he talked, his conversation covered a wide range, recollections of personalities and talk that showed a profound knowledge of European history.'

The Begum Andrée was also painted by Sir Oswald Birley and she became the possessor also of the portraits of her husband and mother-in-law. She loaned the portraits of Lady Ali Shah and the Aga Khan to an exhibition of Sir Oswald's pictures that was held in London in May, 1951.

The Aga Khan returned to Europe after his mother's portrait had been painted in 1936, but he flew back in November the same

year because his mother was reported to be dangerously ill. She was then eighty-eight but she made a remarkable recovery and we soon hear of her again, this time setting out for Teheran to visit the Shah of Persia, Reza Khan.

This was by no means her first visit but it was a case of a very remarkable woman visiting a very remarkable man.

The Shahs of the previous dynasty, kinsmen of the Aga Khan, had an unhappy record of assassination or abdication. Reza Shah founded a new dynasty. Previously he had been doorkeeper at the British Legation in Teheran. Then he joined the regiment of Persian Cossacks and began a National Revolution that unseated the reigning monarch and brought himself to the Throne. On all sides he was hailed as a wonder-hero, a man of tremendous force and driving power. Then came the War.

Whether Reza Shah committed a personal error of judgement or whether certain outside sources into which one had perhaps better not inquire, had influence with him, one cannot be sure, but, factually, he turned into complete accord with Hitler. The British Government caused Reza Shah to be deposed and set up his son, the present Shah in his place, but Lady Ali Shah remained a staunch friend of the present Shah's father until her death on Sunday, February 7th, 1938.

Her end had all the grandeur of a Wagnerian opera; it was just like a Wagnerian goddess departing for Valhalla.

When Lady Ali Shah felt herself to be dying, she left Bombay by steamer with a small retinue. Her objective was Nejah, the sacred burial place of members of the Shiahs. It is customary for the Shiahs to try to die as near Nejah as possible.

Lady Ali Shah remained in her cabin as the ship went up the Persian Gulf and had to be carried ashore on a stretcher. She journeyed as far as Baghdad where she stayed with friends. It was evident that she could journey no farther.

As it happened, the Aga Khan and the Begum were in Egypt

at this time. On receipt of a cable to say how ill his mother was, he flew from Cairo to Baghdad. He arrived half an hour too late. She was already dead.

His Highness could not wait for the funeral of Lady Ali Shah. He said he had an important engagement in Egypt, so he flew back to Cairo.

CHAPTER XV

FATHER AND SONS

THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN the Aga Khan and his first cousin Shahzadin did not last long. When a Moslem wife bears no sons for her husband, a divorce is not an unusual sequel to the marriage; so it was with the first marriages of the present Shah of Persia and his brother-in-law, King Farouk of Egypt. So it was with His Highness, the Aga Khan.

A Moslem divorce is a very simple matter. All a husband has to do is to repeat three times in front of witnesses: 'I renounce this woman. . . .' The simplicity of a Moslem divorce transcends even that of the dissolution of marriages in the U.S.S.R.

After her divorce the Begum Shahzadin lived in retirement in a small house in Bombay. She died on 18th January, 1934, thirty-six years after her marriage. She was in her early fifties. It was a coincidence that Ali Khan, the son of the Aga Khan's second marriage, happened to be in Karachi when his father's former wife died in Bombay. Ali Khan flew to London the following day.

A Moslem woman who does not give birth to male children feels herself disgraced. Shahzadin, chosen by her aunt Lady Ali Shah to be the bride of her adored and only son, was probably no exception to the rule. She was brought up in purdah; her husband would be the first male she ever saw, outside her immediate family. But one must be permitted to speculate on what kind of life the Aga Khan would have had, if the Begum Shahzadin had borne sons. It must not be forgotten that when the Aga Khan was married amid such pomp and circumstance at Poona, he had already established close contact with the Western world; European Courts were open to him. Kings, Queens and Prime Ministers in several lands had loaded him with honours. The pendulum swung for him from East to West and back again,

yet from the very first Western approach it was evident that it was easier and perhaps more agreeable to represent the East to the West, than the West to the East. What conflicts of emotion there must have been between the Lady Ali Shah and her son. But if the Begum had given birth to an Heir-Apparent, one still wonders what her place in the world would have been, for, like her mother-in-law, she spoke no English and never had had any contact with men or women of the West. If the Aga Khan had persisted with the extremely Westernised side of his life, it would have been very unlikely that his Indian wife could have been his companion, as his European wives have been. True, she might have come out of purdah, but women who lived in purdah and then leave it, never seem to forget the indignities of it. An Indian Moslem lady brought up in purdah and who lived the early part of her marriage in purdah once said to me: 'The impudence of your European women! They would come to my house to tea as if they were going slumming; they would ask me, too, whether the milk was properly boiled! And I who knew that English people *never* take boiled milk in their tea!'

Only those with some knowledge of India and the ways of India may perhaps agree the thesis that one of the main reasons why Britain was forced out of India was because of the social boycott we sought to apply to Indians. To think that men such as the Aga Khan or, for that matter, Mr. Nehru, could not cross the portals of places such as the Royal Bombay Yacht Club! Most Freemasonry Lodges in India would entertain Indian Masons as guests but refused to allow them to become members. True, most Indian Freemasonry Lodges retaliated by refusing membership to Europeans, a double action that is the complete negation of fundamental Masonry.

Maybe when the Aga Khan contracted his first European marriage he had in mind an idea of forming a physical bridge between the East and the West, but what the feelings of his first

wife were we shall never know. She lived long enough to see her husband re-married, then a widower, then re-married for the third time. Then she died, a forgotten woman. Only Europeans who had lived a long time in Bombay remembered her at all. They would relate that she grew so stout that she had to have a special chair constructed for her, and that when, as she sometimes did, she drove out from her little house to visit a gymkhana the special chair would be fastened to her carriage. When she died, people said 'Oh, I thought she died years ago!' And that was the end of the lady whose Arabian-Nights wedding at Poona some thirty-six years previously caused such a stir in the world.

As has been related, the Aga Khan's second wife was an Italian, a Signorina Theresa Magliano. The marriage took place in 1908 and the new Begum became a Moslem. Her first child, a boy, died of consumption in childhood. Although, as Heir to the Imamat, he was entitled to be buried in the sacred city of Kerbela, where the Begum Shahzadin, incidentally, is buried, the boy Heir was actually buried in Monaco.

May 13th, 1910, the Begum Theresa gave birth to a second son, at Turin. He was given the name of Ali Solomon Khan, the same who is known to-day in many circles, grave and gay, but mostly gay, as 'Prince' Ali Khan.

Soon after the birth of her second son, the Begum showed signs of tuberculosis and was frequently under treatment for this disease. In her earlier life she had been connected with the stage as a ballerina, but her undoubted artistic gifts turned towards sculpture. On the other hand, it was probably she who developed in her husband a keen sense for beauty and appreciation of and eventually knowledge of Ballet.

In his early youth in India His Highness's bent was towards mechanics, of which he displayed considerable knowledge and interest. Then when motor-cars became popular, he was one of the first persons in India to interest himself in them. He presented

an annual trophy known as the Aga Khan Cup. He had lived to see the bullock-drawn cart, the only means of transport between village and village in India, change into a motor-lorry, but he thought that if he could interest the wealthier classes in India in motoring, the lowlier classes would in course of time profit by this interest. That was the idea behind the Cup; it was not just an ordinary trophy. With the Cup went a prize of 10,000 Rupees to the winner, but the Cup was one year a prize for the winner of the race for the Cup, and the next year it went to the car which won the first prize in an Indian Motor-Car Exhibition, and so on, turn and turn about.

After his second marriage the Aga Khan took less interest in motor-cars and more in Ballet and Music. This interest has persisted and nowadays one finds the Aga Khan no mean critic of Ballet and writing letters to the newspapers about it. All this sprang from his attachment to his second wife.

Marriage to the Aga Khan gave full opportunities to her gift for sculpture. She accompanied him to India and travelled widely in that country, studying Indian plastic art in the rock caves and temples. The Begum Theresa was of a very retiring nature and divided her time between her home and her studio. She exhibited in the London Royal Academy as well as in Paris, Brussels and Rome, but fearing perhaps that if she used her name, the Begum Theresa Aga Khan, it might secure her some undue advantage, she took refuge behind her *nom d'altier*, Ilashah.

It was a little before her death in November, 1926, that her husband began his sensationally successful career on the English Turf, but she did not share in it; indeed, she seldom went to London. Her son Ali was being educated privately at Huntingdon, England, where he was tutored by Mr. C. M. Waddington, formerly the Principal of Mayo College for the sons of Princes, at Rajkumar College, India. He received some religious instruction from a priest attached to the Mosque at Woking, but he

Ismaili, as well as his political duties owed to the Moslem world as a whole. It is possible that the spiritual education of Ali suffered thereby; there was still the English tutor but now no mother to whom he could turn. His father no doubt would have done all he could to replace the dead mother, but the Aga Khan was, as he so often said, a busy man, one day in France, another in Switzerland, the next in England, then in Italy, India, Persia, East Africa—everywhere. Moreover, he was now emerging, largely owing to his racing *bien entendu*, as a world figure whose name and photographs were becoming almost a fixture on the front pages of the world's newspapers. It might be interesting to know how all this impressed Ali.

He went to India to visit his grandmother who lavished affection on him as she had done on his father, but there was, the Aga Khan admits it now, an appalling lack of discipline. The father had experienced perhaps too much, the son almost certainly not enough. Money meant nothing to him, money in masses was his to satisfy any whim. He was losing his boyish shyness and was becoming an adept at sports, particularly horse riding and winter sports. In appearance he was more Italian than Oriental. He was slighter, more slender and svelte than either his father or mother.

There were plenty of rumours concerning a third marriage of the Aga Khan, but although the gossip writers were so often linking his name with one lady after another, there was never a substance of truth in the rumours. The ladies belonged to all ranks and stations and eventually the Aga Khan became very angry indeed. To a reporter who went to see him at his home on the French Riviera and who showed him a cable from his home office: 'Ask Aga whether true he going announce his engagement to Miss Blank,' the Aga Khan blazed back: 'Tell your London office that if they print that I'll sue them for libel!'

And yet when the real news 'broke', as they say in newspaper offices, it was surprising indeed.

The French newspapers, with an age-long tradition of *laisser-faire et beaucoup dire*, which is the real rendering of their proverb . . . *et rien dire*, let their imaginations run riot, managing to make many bricks with little straw. M. Maurice de Waleffe in his successful *Quand Paris était un Paradis* made several references to His Highness, typical of the semi-informed paragraphs that dotted practically all the French newspapers. 'To have money is good,' wrote M. de Waleffe, 'but the art of knowing how to make use of it is better. That art is not lacking in the Aga Khan, who is a King of the Magi from the Orient who came to lay his homage at the feet of the beauties of Paris. The Aga Khan is a god from somewhere in India, near Bombay, an enormous god who looks like a big fish wearing spectacles and who bites with all his teeth into the cake of Life. He is literally worth his weight in gold. . . . He is a *bon viveur* who appreciates race-horses and pretty women; this god who very clearly, from the weight against gold point of view, would be wrong to start slimming.'

Writing of the late M. Cornuché, the man who made the modern Deauville, M. de Waleffe said: 'He knew how to receive the great of this earth. He would not receive the Duke of Westminster as he would the Aga Khan, or vice versa.'

Of the Aga Khan at Deauville: '. . . laughing like an ogre who smells fresh flesh and steering his enormous spectacles to take in a siren just emerging from the sea in a clinging swim suit.'

And then the newspapers discovered the Aga Khan was going to marry a young Frenchwoman from Aix-les-Bains, where he used to have a villa called the Villa Paparika. 'The Little Chocolate Girl' the newspapers called his *fiancée*, saying that she was serving in an Aix-les-Bains sweetshop when he met her. The Aga Khan was furiously angry about all this, but the Press ignored his denials and went on publishing fantastic stories.

I had been away from Paris for some time; it was on my return in 1929 that I found the Paris newspapers having a lovely time with fairy tales told inside an Oriental setting. I telephoned to the Paris Ritz and asked the Aga Khan whether it was in order to congratulate him. He paused a moment and said quietly: 'Have dinner with me this evening at Prunier, will you?' When I reached the restaurant he was sitting next to a young woman who had a younger man by her left. 'I don't think you have met the young lady,' said His Highness, introducing me to Mademoiselle Andrée Josephine Leonie Carron. The young man was her brother.

Mademoiselle Carron had never been in an Aix-les-Bains sweetshop, except as a customer. She was a partner in her sister's dressmaking establishment, Carron Sœurs, on the Boulevard Haussmann, Paris. She came from a quite humble family in the Savoie, and her father was employed in a small Paris restaurant. Mademoiselle Carron has been described as a very beautiful woman; she was—and is—a very charming one indeed, but every eye forms its own idea of beauty. This evening she was simply but stylishly dressed and wore a large, square-cut emerald ring on her engagement finger. The Aga Khan's attitude appeared to be like that of an affectionate father. He was fifty-two, she thirty-one. We discussed, quite naturally, the possible good or bad effects of publicity. I suggested that if they were going to be married, a full statement to the newspapers would be the best way of putting an end to rumours. The Aga Khan accepted this advice, and the next day made a full and frank statement, and having decided to take this step, he went into the matter very fully indeed and held nothing back.

The marriage took place in 1929 at Aix-les-Bains. There were two ceremonies, one at the Town Hall, the usual French civil marriage service performed by the Mayor, M. Henri-Clerc; the second, a Moslem ceremony performed the next day by a priest

from the Paris Mosque. The Aga Khan's son Ali was present at the ceremony. The bride wore a dress of dark green velvet trimmed with a small band of mink. She wore a chocolate coloured toque. Very few of the guests realised that the new Begum was paying her husband a very delicate compliment; the colours of her wedding dress were his racing colours: green with chocolate hoops.

The Aga Khan showered gifts on his third wife. He paid for her trousseau which cost £64,000. He gave her two pearl necklaces, likewise a house and estate on Cap d'Antibes that cost £200,000. He donated half a million francs to the poor of Aix-les-Bains. The bride was asked what she was giving her husband for a wedding present. Somewhat pathetically she replied: 'What could I give him? He is so wealthy and I have so little worldly fortune. I am giving him several books, just to please him, as he is a voracious reader.'

There was some mystery as to where the couple did actually meet, but it was understood that they had known one another some years and that she had refused his proposal of marriage several times before she finally accepted him.

The Mayor, Henri-Clerc, was a journalist-dramatist on the staff of the Paris morning newspaper *L'Œuvre* on which Madame Tabouis was the brightest star. M. Henri-Clerc was very proud of having performed the Aga Khan wedding ceremony and dined out on it for years, in fact until the War, when he, the Editor and the staff of *L'Œuvre*, with the exception of Madame Tabouis, who went to Canada, became most cordial collaborators with the Germans. Henri-Clerc has not been heard from since.

A little more than a year after the wedding, in August, 1930, there were rumours of an estrangement between the Aga Khan and the Begum Andrée. The Aga Khan, true to form, was at Deauville, La Grande Semaine, which in English means a fortnight, was on; there were the races, so the Aga Khan was at

Deauville. The Normandy seaside resort broke out in a rash of reporters. His Highness met them quite calmly and said: 'I have heard talk of an estrangement between my wife and myself. It is quite untrue. She is ill in Switzerland; she has an abscess on the left side of her face; she is being treated by an American doctor, a Dr. Dear, otherwise she would be here. Nothing brings husband and wife together more than illness. I am leaving tonight after the races and the sale of my yearlings.' These sales mark the close of *La Grande Semaine*.

In May, 1930, when, during King George V's illness, Queen Mary held a Court, the Begum Andrée was presented. She wore a dress of a 'silvery material' and a long chain of emeralds.

Ali Khan was now twenty and had become a lieutenant in the Territorial Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment. A little later Ali Khan was made a member of his father's London club, the Marlborough, and sometime later he became a member of the Athenæum. But his gay life continued just the same. There was money without stint always at his command and he spent it 'right royally' as the saying is. He became, in the course of time, the owner of a palace in Poona, the Yerowda Palace, and also of a house just off Park Lane, London. In the summer, when his father had a furnished villa at Deauville, he had one close by. He not only began to judge horses but he also rode them and bought and sold them. He made quite a name as an amateur jockey, both in England and France. His father was immensely proud of him and would travel far to see him ride, fearing, as any father might, that his son would meet with an accident. Then Ali Khan obtained his ticket as a pilot and flew his own machine. But he was crazy about horses and in one day he spent £23,000 buying yearlings. For a while it seemed that in his father's eyes he could do no wrong, but then something seemed to go wrong. There were frequent scenes between father and son and once at the London Ritz, following an incident that occurred as the

Aga Khan and his guests were leaving the luncheon table, Ali was soundly berated by the Aga Khan's secretary, Miss Blain.

The Ali Khan was having a gay time in Mayfair where he was known affectionately as the 'Black Prince'; also in Paris and on the Riviera. He lived at a terrific pace. Then when he was twenty-three, his step-mother, the Begum Andrée, gave birth to a son who was named Sadruddin. In his early years he lived with his father and mother in the Villa Jeanne-Andrée on the Boulevard du Cap at Antibes. He had an English nannie with whom he spent hours on the near-by beach, where he was known to other nannies as '*le petit Ka-Ka Khan*', for reasons that will be appreciated by students of French. He grew up strong and stout and physically was quite unlike his half-brother, Ali Solomon. Ali, as has been said, was dark and slender, whereas Sadruddin was heavily built, like his father, but he had a very French face, like his mother. He was educated in France and Switzerland, just like a French boy. After the War and the divorce between his mother and father, of which we shall write later, he went to Harvard College to study economics. Before the divorce he accompanied his father and mother to Bombay to be present at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. His half-brother was also there.

Sadruddin is a brilliant scholar. An average of fifty per cent correctness in the Entrance Examination papers secures a pass for an applicant to enter Harvard. When Sadruddin was only seventeen he was given a set of Entrance Examination papers and secured eighty-one per cent correctness.

Soon after Sadruddin Khan went to Harvard he changed his name. Whether the change is to be permanent or whether it is for college campus purposes only, is not clear, but at Harvard the boy calls himself Jean Balrois; the Jean presumably being the masculine of one of his mother's names, Jeanne.

Sadruddin Khan (or Jean Balrois) when he went to India was

a compromise between a European and an Indian. He wore a white flannel suit and either a turban or a fez. He was garlanded with flowers, as Indians are on festival occasions. His step-brother Ali, however, made no compromise, but his costume could not precisely be described as Indian. It bore a close family resemblance to stage costumes worn by the late Ivor Novello on his most glamorous occasions.

Mayfair seemed to be the magnet for Ali Khan and tongues began to wag; would he, would he not marry this one or that one. Then when he was twenty-six his impending marriage to Mrs. Lorel Guinness was announced. She was the divorced wife of a member of the brewing family. The Ali Khan had been the co-respondent in the case. The wedding took place on May 13th, 1936, with the Aga Khan present. The bride took the Moslem name of Tajudowlah.

In the year following the wedding the Ali Khan and his wife went to India to attend the Silver Jubilee of the Nizam of Hyderabad and were received as Moslem people of rank. Then they visited other Moslem countries: Turkey, Syria and Egypt. Then East Africa.

Two sons were born of this marriage. The elder boy was named Karim Aga, and the younger one Amyn Mohammed. They have lived most of their lives in Switzerland but it is said that they were to be brought up as Moslems.

In 1938 the question of the title of the Ali Khan came up for notice. The India Office announced that the older son of the Aga Khan is correctly designated the Ali Khan and not Prince Ali Khan. The question was apparently raised by the Jockey Club, but the Jockey Club for courtesy's sake still allows the Ali Khan to call himself Prince Ali Khan for racing purposes.

Indian sycophants go a step farther than calling him 'Prince'. In one publication they refer to him as 'His Serene Highness Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Ali Khan.' His first wife is called 'Her

Serene Highness Princess Tajudowlah' and both their sons have the title of 'Prince' conferred on them.

This publication goes still further. It claims: 'He (Ali Khan) served with the American and French Armies, gaining distinction in the field for meritorious service, for which he was awarded the Special Bronze Star for conspicuous gallantry by the American Commander-in-Chief. This decoration was followed later by the award of the Croix de Guerre by General de Gaulle.'

In point of fact, the Ali Khan's war services were quite curious. Although by title a British subject, one presumes, because at birth his father was a British subject, he preferred to serve with the French and not the British Forces. He was given the status of an officer in the French Foreign Legion and served as A.D.C. to General Weygand in Syria. That force was there because the Allies feared Russia would enter the War on the side of Germany and would attack in the Middle East. After the Fall of France little is known of the whereabouts of the Ali Khan, but after the landing in North Africa he was with the American Forces as liaison officer and was given a medal for his good work.

The Ali Khan became prominent in newspaper headlines when it was rumoured he was going to marry a Senora Casiano, then married to an American actor named Orson Welles. She was a film actress under the name of Rita Hayworth. Both the lady and her intended husband were still married. She left Europe and returned to Hollywood. He followed and rented a house opposite hers, but Miss Hayworth said: 'We are just friends.'

Eventually it was announced that they were to be married, the respective divorces having received attention. The Aga Khan was quite cross with reporters who went to make enquiries.

The reporters asked what His Highness thought of his daughter-in-law to be. He replied: 'I'm charmed. I know no-one more quiet and ladylike. American women are the most charming in the world.'

Then someone asked about his son's divorce. 'There are 150,000 divorces annually in Britain,' snapped His Highness. 'Why should everyone criticise this couple who have not lived together for three years?'

It was perhaps not surprising that His Highness should wish to fend off questions about divorce, because his own was not so far away and perhaps because it took place during the War, it had appeared a little mysterious.

The Aga Khan's marriage to his third wife lasted fourteen years. Apart from the one report of the estrangement a year after the wedding, it was believed that the couple were as ideally happy as the Begum said they were. Then came the news from Switzerland that His Highness and the Begum had been divorced for 'reasons of mutual dislike', *anglice* incompatability of temper. Now, here on the French Riviera, it was the Ali Khan who was also showing bad temper.

He rented the fabulous villa, the Château de l'Horizon, on the main road from Nice to Cannes, the villa that belonged formerly to the American actress Maxime Elliot and where she so frequently entertained Mr. Winston Churchill and the Duke of Windsor. There were most undignified scenes there and elsewhere, and if the Aga Khan disliked all the blaze of publicity, as one must presume he did, he was certainly in the thick of it. Neither as an Ismaili god, a statesman or prominent racehorse owner did he show to any advantage. His true friends were sincerely sorry for him. His strained relations with his elder son were known to the few and not to the many, but those who knew secretly admired His Highness for the manner in which he did not 'let down the Ali Khan'.

The bride-to-be and her small daughter by her first marriage flew the Atlantic to Europe. The child was left in Switzerland with her future husband's sons by his first marriage, meanwhile the mother went to Antibes for her second nuptials.

Reporters and press photographers flocked to the Château de l'Horizon where Ali Khan, his nerves perhaps frayed, tried to break the men's cameras. The reporters besieged the Aga Khan's villa at Le Cannet where he was living with his new wife, his fourth. He received the Press courteously, a fine gentleman, although how he must have hated it all.

There were thousands of words cabled all round the world about this fantastic marriage, a ceremony eventually performed by the Communist Mayor of Vallauris, the home of Pablo Picasso, a pretty little mediæval townlet of not more than about 5,000 inhabitants. It lies just back of the Château de l'Horizon, not much more than a mile away. What the inhabitants, gathered round the thirteenth century chapel, must have thought of all this luxury is hard to imagine. After the ceremony, the feast; with fountains running champagne, rose petals floating in the swimming pool and jazz bands everywhere. It was either pure Hollywood or imitation Arabian Nights.

Not more than six months after the Ali Khan-Rita Hayworth wedding the world's Press began to take an embarrassing interest in possible progeny. Directly after his son's wedding the Aga Khan was asked whether he wanted a boy or a girl as first child of his son's second marriage. He replied: 'I want a girl. I'm fed up with boys all the time.'

Some newspapers indulged in flights of fancy and argued with themselves whether, supposing the first child was a boy, he would in course of time become Aga Khan V.

They need not have troubled. Should Ali Khan eventually succeed his father, his successor would be one of his two sons by his first wife, the former Mrs. Joan Lorel Guinness. But, the Aga Khan's wishes were fulfilled. The first child of the second marriage was a girl, born amidst almost as much fanfare as attended her mother's wedding.

It was arranged that the accouchement should take place in

Switzerland. Daily newspaper readers were regaled with what amounted to a running commentary. 'The silk bed sheets awaiting the new baby cost £70,' readers were told. Bored reporters attached to the United Nations offices in Geneva ran a sweepstake on the date of birth of this baby. When it came, aptly stressing the point of one of Dorothy Parker's best stories, the happy father Ali Khan told reporters: 'The baby is seven weeks premature.'

The Aga Khan was in Rome when a telephoned message brought him the news of the birth of a granddaughter—the first.

'Are you glad?' he was asked.

'Whatever God gives is welcome,' replied His Highness diplomatically.

To another inquirer he said: 'I have always wanted a granddaughter, Allah has been kind and has granted my wish.'

The baby was given the Moslem name of Yasmin, and the Begum Andrée, the Aga Khan's divorced wife, was photographed taking flowers to the American film star who was now calling herself Princess Ali Khan.

Very soon now rumours started to float round Europe and the United States concerning an impending separation of the couple. They went to East Africa and the lady returned alone. Ali Khan came back and had a bad ski accident in Switzerland. Then his wife took her baby daughter and flew away to Hollywood. Soon it was announced that she had filed a petition for an American divorce and was claiming a million pounds. There has been no further news of the divorce—or the million pounds.

The Ali Khan resumed his gay round, racing, dancing and gambling. In 1950 his name was constantly in the headlines, particularly in the French newspapers. Incidents in Vittel Casino brought him into particular prominence and again and again his name has been linked with ladies whom it was said he might marry.

In December, 1951, he arrived at Rio de Janeiro. Immediately news agencies flashed the information: 'Prince Ali Khan denied yesterday that he and the French actress Lise Bourdin are engaged.' But nevertheless, a fortnight later the *Star* newspaper of London published a portrait of the lady, semi-dressed, with the caption: 'Lise Bourdin: Romance with Prince Ali?'

The accompanying long gossip paragraph said he was now in Buenos Aires and 'intends to have a wonderful time, looking for racehorses to buy and going to the coast for bathing'. The writer regretted that 'Prince Ali Khan did not say whether he would call on the fabulous Eva Perón'.

The Ali Khan was apparently questioned once more concerning his engagement to Mlle. Bourdin, but he said 'we are just friends'. One wonders whether his father, if he saw the newspaper, did not consider the alleged remark slightly ominous, but how a gentleman still married can become engaged to another lady was not explained.

It is to be regretted, however, that these gossipy paragraphs, which one presumes interest a certain public, do but serve to hide an issue that one day will become a very important one. His Highness the Aga Khan is seventy-five years of age. Since the War he has on several occasions been very seriously ill, but his paternal grandfather lived to the age of nearly ninety-three and his mother died when she was ninety, so his anticipation of a long span of life should be good, but still, one day the issue will have to be faced.

One may agree that much of the importance of the Aga Khan as a political figure has vanished, not so much because of his age, but because of Partition in India and the somewhat clumsy means used to reach that conclusion. He remains nevertheless a god to millions of fanatical believers. Agreed they may be ignorant, but what likelihood is there, one wonders, of light coming to their darkness, if darkness it be. It is, therefore, of importance that the

present Aga Khan should have a successor worthy of the post he will one day be called upon to take up. Maybe the Ali Khan is such a worthy man, but at the age of forty-two he still shows many traits of irresponsibility, but it may be that he has what the public eye does not see.

So far he has had very little opportunity of getting into very close contact with his father's followers, although the Khoja Reformers contacted him through an Open Letter addressed to 'Mr. Ali Solomon Khan, known as "Prince Ali Khan", son of His Highness the Aga Khan.' The Open Letter is called an Appeal to call attention to the danger from bodily harm of Reformers 'struck down in the dark by fanatical followers of His Highness your father'.

Alleged particulars are given of such attacks. The Appeal, after claiming that Reformers have met with 'great violence', cites alleged instances such as what is said to have occurred November 23rd, 1928, when the Hindu Editor of a vernacular newspaper published in Bombay was stabbed to death. The murderers were given five and seven years 'vigorous imprisonment'. They were well defended.

Earlier, on October 25th of the same year, it is alleged that in Karachi three men attacked a Khoja Reformer with hatchets.

It may be asked, what could the Ali Khan do about such matters? The answer would indeed be difficult to find.

It is clear that the Aga Khan's older son knows little of the Orient; his second son knows even less, but the one or the other will, in the fulness of time, have to succeed him. The tenets of his Faith say that the succession must go in a direct and unbroken line, but it does not follow that the succession must of necessity go to the older of an Aga Khan's sons. As we have seen, the present Aga Khan succeeded because his older step-brothers died, so there was no other possible successor, but himself. Now at this writing the choice of a fourth Aga Khan must be made from one

of two sons, both of whom are half European, one half-Italian, the other half-French.

It would perhaps be fair to suppose that, all things being the same, the choice would be the Ali Khan because he, at least, has a little knowledge of the East, whereas the younger has more knowledge of the United States; yet maybe, in a changing world, the Aga Khan thinks that this might be an advantage.

CHAPTER XVI

IF I WERE DICTATOR . . .

LIKE MANY OTHER men, in humbler spheres as well as in authority, the Aga Khan has from time to time experimented mentally with the ideas he would put into service were he a World Dictator. He is, of course, a Dictator to his millions of followers; there is no gainsaying his dictate, but it was to a much wider world he was talking when, in 1931, he accepted the invitation of the B.B.C. to take part in a broadcasting series with the theme of what the speaker would do were he in a position to be a World Dictator for a period of twenty years.

It will be noted perhaps that His Highness had very little novelty to offer, apart from a suggestion that non-Asiatic children should learn an Asiatic language while Asiatic children should learn a European language. It is interesting to note, however, that twenty-one years ago the Aga Khan opined that 'things could not be very much worse than they are to-day'.

But he found reason to change his opinion, and as the world marched steadily towards a second World War, the mind of the Aga Khan dwelt on the necessity of a world figure attempting to prevent it. In May, 1936, while in India His Highness turned once more to this idea of a twenty-year-long World Dictatorship, but the ideas that were not very new in 1931 were not more startling in 1936. Nevertheless, His Highness thought that his ideas which had been broadcast should be presented in the written word. A London Sunday newspaper gave the Aga Khan's plans considerable prominence, and presented them as being 'specially written' for them. It also stated that the author had been educated at 'Eton and Cambridge', whereas, as is factually known, His Highness received the whole of his education in India, a fact that

should stress the extraordinarily wide knowledge of world history the Aga Khan's broadcast ideas display.

'I must confess,' said the Aga Khan, 'that I have enjoyed the musings which have arisen from my promise to contribute to this series of talks on the exercise of a World Dictatorship extending over twenty years. These musings have lead to a re-examination of convictions I have held from boyhood, and for the most part to their confirmation; but the main pleasure of this mental exercise has been that of considering the incalculable opportunities for the service of the human race such a Dictatorship would give. Never in the history of man have there been so many experiments in the art of government as there are to-day, and never have opinions thereon been so varied and discordant. But no one has the opportunity to experiment on a world-wide scale. The fountains of the great deep are broken up, and the way of restoring calm after storm, with universal acceptance, has not been found.

'The responsibility attaching to the acquirement of Dictatorship would be tremendous, and a sense not only of mission but also of humour would be needed lest it should overwhelm its possessor. In bearing it, however, he would have one comforting reflection. It would be that, although mistakes in judgement might be made and here and there in the light of experience some decisions might have to be modified, nothing that the Dictator did—given a single eye to human good and progress—could make the world worse than it is to-day. The confusion and uncertainty of our day, confronts us every time we open our morning paper. "The world is out of joint", but I should not regard it as a "cursed spite" to be called to "put it right". On the contrary, I should glory in an opportunity so unique to serve humanity.

'One advantage the Dictator has is that things could not be very much worse than they are now. Politically we find the

centre of modern civilisation, Europe, not only a house divided against itself, but, if we compare it with the disastrous conditions that prevailed in the last years of the nineteenth and the early years of this century, it is actually *worse*. Now there is general anarchy; no one knows what are the commitments of each State towards another, how far they are allied, and how far they are enemies. Every country's hand seems to be against its neighbour, and the clear-cut policies of the pre-War groups are unknown. The impossible system of reparations introduced with so-called "Allied War Debts" has made the political confusion an economic one as well. Values of goods depend more than ever on who produces and for whom they are produced; for if they come as part of reparations or debt payments they are obviously *not* produced with that extreme exchangeability which is the real value of all production. Central Europe and especially Germany, has been turned into a vast territory where the people are under-fed and under-paid in order to throw on the world market (in the form of reparations) goods which compete with the purely economic produce of other nations. But this is only the first step; for with it come the Allied debt problems that cannot be tackled unless the problem of reparations is disposed of.

'If we turn to the point of view of armament we find that the War has not taught the world the real lesson which we had all hoped the complete Allied victory would have driven home. In France, in Italy, in the Balkans, in Russia, in America, in Great Britain itself, and, as far as it is allowed, in Germany, the race for competitive armament, if not so shameless and aggressive, is yet very real and all the more dangerous for being unavowed. The public are not informed of the various standards of air, land and sea forces as they were in the pre-War days, but this is only an apparent want of aggressiveness. The very fact that these activities go on, less known and less constantly touched upon, renders them all the more dangerous; for they are there, and, if not now

thoroughly scotched, will come out with all the further violence of their scientific preparation and efficiency—when the peaceful citizens of the world least expect them.

'It is a commonplace of contemporary history that the Great War opened the floodgates of the troubles from which we still suffer. So I should deem it my first duty as Dictator to make as nearly as can be impossible the overwhelming calamity of another world war, and to rectify the acknowledged errors of the peace concluded twelve years ago. To this end the demilitarisation of the world by the abolition of national armies and navies would be a first essential. I know that authority must in the final resort rest upon force; but the force I would provide would be internationally owned. For purposes of internal peace national police and gendarmerie would be ample. Ordinary voluntary forces could be established for aiding the police on occasions of sudden necessity. These might be enrolled and placed under the local authorities, who would co-operate with the police if any abnormal need arose through internal disturbances. There would be freedom of air and of the seas, with international aerial and naval patrol to prevent air raids and any return to the piracy of former days.

'Thus the real army, the air and sea forces, the striking arm of the land forces through light cavalry, mobile infantry, smaller tanks and various other technical improvements would remain at the disposal only of the super-national government, whose members would represent a free choice of all the nationalities that would go to make the League which would take up the succession of my Dictatorship after the twenty years in which I had organised the national and super-national government.

'My Dictatorship would uphold, rather than break down, national autonomy within a super-national world. Excessive centralisation would be avoided by the maintenance of local Parliaments, but with a World Parliament at Geneva or Lausanne,

the heart of civilisation, to advise and assist the Dictator, and to replace the present League of Nations. It would be essential to the satisfactory working of the new order to readjust national groupings where they form a source of irritation and unrest. From long and close study of world affairs I am driven to the conclusion that few things are more inimical to peace and good-will between neighbours than the tearing asunder of ethnic and linguistic groups at the dictate—whether of a Napoleon or a President Wilson—to serve the ends of large and more powerful competing interests.

'A general world-wide recastment of existing political units would not be necessary. The New World could be left untouched, for neither in North America nor South America is there any sense of serious grievance. On the Continent of Europe there need be no territorial reshaping of Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Muscovy, and the Scandinavian countries. This is also broadly true of Italy, except that she might be asked to surrender some acquisitions along the Alps which, in my view, are essentially German and not Italian.

'The danger zones are Central Europe, the Balkans, and Asia. I would make of Germany and Austria one nation, restoring to them such truly Germanic territory as has been acquired by others. In districts essentially Hungarian in population I should return, to that unjustly maimed but generous and talented race, such territories as desire by a free plebiscite to join her. In the Balkans, which have undergone so many transformations in national groupings as a result of ten years' almost continual fighting, I would have a properly conducted and free plebiscite for all doubtful zones. Where racial and cultural unity existed in the past I would let the peoples concerned unite or remain united. In a word, aggressor States would be compelled to disgorge, and the map of Europe would be remade on cultural and voluntary lines.

'I would pursue the same policy in the Middle East and Central Asia, by aiming at reuniting, each under one strong Government, the Persian and Turkish races. The Central Asian regions I would form into States on cultural and racial lines. The present clumsy and ill-assorted provincial groupings in India are the issue of historical or administrative accident, and not of planned design. They would be replaced by more homogeneous provinces bringing together—to the fullest extent permitted by inexorable circumstance—groups of the same linguistic tribe. I have advocated such remaking of the map of India, and I remain convinced to-day that this policy would provide one of the keys to an effective all-India federation. The Arabs are to-day an unjustly treated race. They are under different governments and different mandatories. I would make a federal but united Arabia something on the lines of the old Germanic Empire, leaving here and there to hereditary principalities their internal autonomy, but uniting the whole peninsula and its adjacent Arab lands by a central federal government at some central place on the lines of Washington or Canberra. Japan can retain unimpaired her island nationality. In China there is linguistic affinity and a tradition of centuries of unity; but in view of the course of events in our day, I should be inclined to give large provinces the opportunity for contracting out—if they wished to do so.

'In Africa the tendency would be toward aggregation rather than division. For instance, I would make of the North-West one State. Egypt and the Soudan would be left as at present. The South African Union would be retained, excepting that Natal, being so preponderatingly British, might be given the option to contract out. In all that I have said I have not lost sight of the needs of the less civilised peoples, who are to be found in Africa in greater measure than elsewhere. I would entrust them for a transitional period of from fifteen to twenty years to a general league of all the nations. In Central Africa, for instance, the

administration would be in charge of nominees of the League. One of their main responsibilities would be the steady preparation of the people by education and culture, to take over the responsibility for the administration of their own affairs.

'The regroupings made as a means to cultural progress would need to be safeguarded from an excess of particularism. To-day the two main streams of civilisation are fed from two widely divided cultures—the Asiatic and the European. Every Asian of education is brought face to face with European culture in a variety of ways; but, broadly speaking, the European who has not lived in the East (as also nine hundred and ninety-nine out of one thousand of his fellow countrymen who have sojourned in Asia) does *not* know eastern culture in any real sense. I would therefore make bi-culturalism an essential feature of education. I should aim at the ideal of every European child being taught an Eastern language, and every Asiatic child a European language. It is scarcely necessary to say that under my Dictatorship, compulsory education would be world wide and be kept up till, say eighteen or twenty years of age.

'I should certainly give to education a wider meaning than that which it now has in the public mind. The system would include teaching on health, on the laws of sex and parenthood, and on art and the life of the soul in the widest sense. The broad aim would be to give the workers a recognition of the value of their leisure in providing opportunities for spiritual, æsthetic, and intellectual pursuits, for delight in nature and art in their manifold forms and, above all, for direct communion with the unseen. The effort would be to enrich life through many channels. Travel, like staff rides in the Army, would be regarded as a normal part of education.

'Spiritual values would be given the pre-eminence which is their inherent right. By spiritual experience I must make it clear that nothing the nature of asceticism, or monkishness or

renunciation of the responsibilities, as well as the enjoyment, of life is meant. Good and beautiful thoughts, kindliness and gentleness towards others, as well as a constant feeling of communion with the obvious soul in the universe around us—these, rather than absurd inhibitions and taboos, would be the meaning of religious education. The value and importance for happiness and contentment, of reflection over the fruits of knowledge, and the direct reaction to outer nature would be taught to the young. The habit of contemplation would be as general during moments of leisure as is to-day the wastage of precious time. There would be full freedom and equality of religious opinion, and also of practice so long as it did not entrench upon the rights of others.

'Poetry and imaginative literature of all countries, especially of the neglected Moslem world, would be brought within the reach of each and all. The promotion of the public health would be sought both by education thereon and by the encouragement of physical culture, hiking, sports, and games. The time and money now foolishly wasted by sections of the public in over-clothing and over-feeding would be replaced by rational diet and dress, and the use of golf-courses, tennis-courts, cricket, football and hockey grounds, and other sports for which widespread provision would be made. In these ways the people would be encouraged to divert the mind and exercise the body. There would be no regimentation in the use of amusements, as each individual would be left free to choose his own form of recreation.

'The Dictatorship would recognise that there is no standing still in human affairs, and that both science and economic policy must serve the ends of progress. As Sir J. J. Thomson showed in his presidential address to the Section of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at the centenary meeting of the British Association, there is too much mass production in university science teaching. Far too many unsuitable men are turned to laboratory

work in various branches of research. The best results can be achieved, I am confident, by providing the fullest means for investigation to men of proved power and achievement. I would give a Faraday, a Ross, and an Einstein adequate resources, and let him choose his own assistants. In this way scientific research and progress would be revitalised with the fire of individual genius. The higher prizes would be offered—not only from the material, but from the social and honorific points of view—for scientific discoveries; while those who showed natural inclinations and promise by original thought and work, would be placed in positions where they could carry forward their researches, not only in all the inductive sciences, but in history, literature, and economic studies.

'From all that has been said it might appear that the necessity for man to face danger and adversity to develop his mental resources and hard effort, for preparation and foresight, might be weakened. Peace, a higher development of contemplation and reflective education and more general possession and variety of goods might, one would think, in the long run sap the foundations from which progressors come. But I maintain, on the contrary, that the twenty years of my Dictatorship would go a long way to strengthen these qualities while changing their direction. Instead of having to combat man, to face danger from neighbouring States; instead of making the effort for a painful production of goods; instead of years of spending and service in order to save a little in order to buy a little—the society I should have prepared (for the supernational States that would take up the continuation of my work) would have learned that the greatest of all conquests, the greatest of all struggles, and the greatest of all triumphs will be over the forces of nature. Through the constant encouragement of individual effort to overcome the impediments that nature has placed in the way of man's progress, a new mentality would be gradually formed. The draining and

reclaiming of Africa, of Siberia, of the deserts of Central Asia; the development of the vast sub-Himalayan forests by means intensely more powerful than those now at man's disposal, by even the conquest through science of the coldest north and the warmest areas of the equator, the qualities now wasted in fratricidal wars would be turned to the preparation of such organisations as would render a retrograde reaction, after my twenty years' Dictatorship came to an end, if not impossible, at least most improbable.

'Recent events have shown how great are the reactions of economic policy upon the welfare of the world. As Dictator I would break down high tariff walls and promote a real freedom of trade, subject only to the proviso that the circumstances of any given area of production might make it beneficial for the world (and not merely for the country itself) to secure temporary protection for the proper development of a given industry. The tariff for this purpose would be scientific, and would be ordained only after expert examination of each claim. The rationalisation of industry and intensive production would be promoted, not as making profit an end in itself, but with a view to ensuring cultural leisure for all. The uncertainty and speculation which hold the world in thrall, so long as the value of goods depends entirely upon the precious metals, would be replaced by a fixed *un*varying exchange, whereby both gold and silver tokens and paper money (based upon the guarantees of the Dictatorship) would balance goods.

'Private property in the holding of shares would be encouraged, and for purposes of production and development the State might make advances to industrialists at nominal rates. But debenture holdings, with their tendency to handicap enterprise would be *dis*couraged. With freedom of trade I would restore the freedom of communication and travel which now suffer from so many post-war restrictions. It would be in accordance with the spirit

of the policy I have outlined to reduce the volume of legislation in all countries.

'The fact that, owing to scientific discovery, more and more goods can be placed on the market should not lead to such depreciation of general values as to render men workless and poor. On the contrary, money values would be so adjusted to goods as to make it the object of the World State to place at the disposal of each consumer (for very little money value) so large and varied a quantity of materials as to make a position of leisure possible for him. He would thus benefit from the intellectual and physical advantages of the higher culture brought to his door not only by his proper education in youth, but by courses of lectures, private but voluntary tuition, and intellectual and explanatory series of visits to important cities and the countryside.

'You will see that the broad general principles of the exercise of my Dictatorship would be to secure the prevention of war, to break down the animosities and barriers of goodwill, to provide scope for both national and individual self-expression, and to seek to give each citizen capacity and opportunity to share in the rich heritage which the human race as a whole, and not merely some portions of it, should receive by reason of the toil, the teaching, and the sacrifice of past generations. And then, when my twenty years' Dictatorship was over, I should hope and believe that the better world for which I had prepared would not so easily fall back into the state of spiritual, intellectual, social, political, and economic anarchy which has been the fate of mankind up till to-day.'

CHAPTER XVII

POMP WITHOUT CIRCUMSTANCE

IT WAS IN 1934 that one first perceived that the Aga Khan was feeling a sense of frustration and perhaps irritation against the British Government of the day, the Ramsay MacDonald National Government. Outwardly his life showed no sign of any change; indeed it was not until some questions were asked in the House of Commons that one realised anything was amiss.

On Monday, July 23rd, 1934, Major-General Sir Alfred Knox asked the Secretary of State for India what reply the government has given to the notification of the Aga Khan to the Government of India of his desire to possess an estate in India.

Sir Samuel Hoare: 'My hon. and gallant Friend is presumably referring to a question asked in the Indian Legislative Assembly, which has been reported in the Press. I have nothing to add to the reply which is given, which was that a confidential communication was received from His Highness the Aga Khan but the Government was not in a position to disclose its nature.'

Sir Alfred Knox: 'Is there any other prominent supporter of the White Paper policy who has asked for an estate in India?'

Sir Samuel Hoare: 'I do not see the relevance of that supplementary question. If it is meant to cast an aspersion on the motives of the Aga Khan, I am sure that the whole House will say that it is entirely misplaced.'

The questions related to temporal power and the Aga Khan. One gathered that the Aga Khan desired that the British Government should grant him some territory in India over which he could rule. This request the British Government refused. The newspapers gave the matter little attention. It was the year following the Reichstag Fire and the coming to power of Hitler, so even such a picturesque personage as the Aga Khan could not

compete in the headlines with the emerging figure of Adolf Hitler whose shadow was now cast across the world's stage.

Lord Willingdon was at this time Viceroy and Governor-General of India and with him the Aga Khan was on the very best of terms. The late Edward Thompson, that self-chosen expert on India, once wrote that Lord Willingdon treated every man as if he were an Old Etonian. This remark was intended as a sneer, but those who knew Lord Willingdon in India—he had been Governor of Bombay Province long before he was Viceroy—will admit that he carried out what was at the best of times a very difficult job and during his term in Delhi (1931–36) a particularly difficult job, with a nice combination of tact and firmness. To him then the Aga Khan took his problem. What this problem was one can best explain in his own words.

I had not seen His Highness for some little time, but being in London soon after those questions in the House of Commons and hearing that the Aga Khan was at the Ritz, I telephoned and arranged to call. We met by accident in the hall; he had just returned from golf at Sunningdale. We went up to his suite and after replying to his ritual question: 'Tea with me or whisky and soda by yourself?' I asked what lay behind those questions.

He answered somewhat bitterly, I thought: 'Perhaps one day the British Government will realise the services my family has rendered it.' Then he added: 'It is not for myself that I asked for some sort of temporal power but for my son.' The Ali Khan at that time, 1934, was twenty-four. He still stood very high in his father's esteem and regard, but perhaps the father had some presentiment of the future, not necessarily his son's personal future, but of the way the world, and particularly India, might go, and he wished to make his elder son's future safe and secure. The second son, Sadruddin, was born the year he appealed to the British Government on behalf of his first born. Those matters, that is to say, his reasons for making the request, he had put to

Lord Willingdon and had found him responsive and friendly disposed. It was understood that the Viceroy had done as the Aga Khan had asked and had had the request passed to Whitehall, together with the Viceroy's favourable comments. But Whitehall was not receptive.

It often pleases the Aga Khan to talk in fables and parables. His reference to what his family had done encompassed a very long period. He was, of course, making references to the services of his grandfather and his own. His father had lived too short a time to have rendered any special services to the British Raj, but the first Aga Khan, the 'Old Man of the Mountains' as he was sometimes called, had rendered services to Sir Charles Napier, while the present Aga Khan had most undoubtedly rendered very considerable services both prior to the first War and also during hostilities. It might appear to many that his request was not altogether unwarranted, although one could think of many reasons which could be brought out in opposition.

The Aga Khan's suggestion was that he should be granted land in the Province of Sind. No actual acreage was mentioned, although it was understood that His Highness would have been well content with a relatively small estate.

About the time that the matter was brought to public notice in Britain, the French Government was having serious troubles in their mandated territory, Syria. Before the first World War France had had important cultural, religious and economic interests in Syria. After the defeat of Turkey, France applied for and was granted a mandate over this Moslem province. But there were troubles almost from the beginning of the Mandate. This was curious, because in North Africa French Colonial policy had been very successful. It is very possible that the Italian Government, deprived of the former Turkish province of Smyrna, which the Allies had promised to her, was not entirely guiltless concerning the troubles in Syria. In any case, considerable

pressure was being brought to bear on France to end the Mandate as quickly as possible and to give Syria its freedom. Naturally, in the course of time France would have had to do so, but she was by no means willing to do so at this time, when the Mandate had only existed for fourteen years. It was at this moment that there was a suggestion, if the French Government set up a monarchy in Syria and chose a monarch who was very friendly towards France, France could surrender her Mandate. This plan was looked upon with considerable favour. As soon as there were rumours of it a number of Princes of Arabia put forward their names as candidates; some applied to the British Embassy at Paris, inviting British support for their candidature. None gained any support from the French Government, but the French Government would have liked the Aga Khan to have put forward his name.

The minor princelings who applied were quite unknown; some even lived in Paris, but this was not enough. There was, however, magic in the name of the Aga Khan. For years he had made his principal home in France. He was married to a Frenchwoman. His face was perhaps more familiar to the average Frenchman than the face of their own President of the Republic. Here was a man of great personal wealth and whose pro-French sentiments were beyond any doubt.

There was, nevertheless, one great obstacle: the Aga Khan did not want to be King of Syria.

The discreet soundings taken by the French established that point very clearly. The whole project, then, for establishing a monarchy in Syria came to nothing; during the years that followed, the pages of French history in Syria contained records of disaster after disaster, ending with British troops having to escort the French troops sent by General de Gaulle to safety.

To speculate on the reasons which led the Aga Khan to refuse to entertain the idea—it was never a definite offer—means

probing wounds which may still be sore, for one cannot be certain that, as matters materialised, His Highness does not to-day in his heart of hearts regret not having taken the opportunity that was open to him. But subsequent developments, following on the British Government's refusal in 1934, show perfectly clearly that the Aga Khan did not at the time regard this decision as being final.

It is very probable indeed, nevertheless, that the Aga Khan's decision not to entertain seriously the French Government's project did him very much credit. At this time, a point most material to his subsequent changes, His Highness was a British-Indian subject. That citizenship he prized but would have had to surrender had he become King of Syria. It is probable that this kingship would not have affected his Imamat of the Ismailis, or, if it had, it would not have touched it except in a favourable manner. No doubt there were other and perhaps secret considerations, but one surmises that in its widest sense the question of a break with Britain was the paramount factor in the decision. But Syria, as a kingdom, had considerable advantage over the comparatively modest request the Aga Khan had made for a small slice of territory in Sind. Syria, excluding Lebanon, is a country of some 60,000 square miles and had a population of approximately three million. Its many complicated political problems would have provided His Highness with plenty of opportunities to exercise the plans he propounded when he broadcast to the world and proclaimed what he would do were he able to be a Dictator for a period of twenty years. In 1934 His Highness was made a Privy Councillor, an honour to which he was by no means insensible, although some of his friends were inclined to regard it by way of being a consolation prize.

While the world, onwards from 1934, was heading for a disastrous War, the Aga Khan was cogitating his own private plans to acquire temporal power in India. For five years he was

preparing his case, and in October, 1938, the Month of Munich, he launched another attempt to make the future of his older son safe and secure.

Then, under date October 21st, 1938, His Highness sent a long Memorandum to the then Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, who died in 1952. Copies of the Memorandum were sent to the Prime Minister of Great Britain and to the Cabinet as a whole. The date is important to retain because the document is of considerable historic importance and undoubtedly marked a turning point in the relations between His Highness and the British Government.

The Aga Khan opened his Memorandum by stating that five years previously he had submitted to Lord Linlithgow's predecessor a document in which he did not ask 'any large amount of territory' but the aim was to regularise a status 'as will give my heirs the assured prospect of continuity in the traditions of attachment to the British Crown and loyal and influential service to the Crown in India which was established by my grandfather nearly a century ago.'

So far it will be agreed that the Memorandum supports the thesis mentioned earlier, that the Aga Khan would not entertain the Syrian project because of his attachment to the British Crown, but developing his ideas, His Highness later suggests that circumstances may have caused some change in sentiment.

The next section of the Memorandum, however, recalled briefly the importance of his status in India when King George V and Queen Mary visited India in 1905. They were then Prince and Princess of Wales. 'I was the only Indian nobleman whom they visited,' wrote the Aga Khan simply.

There follows then a short accounting of the services the Aga Khan afforded the British Government as their secret agent, and he tells the Viceroy of the sources to which he may turn to obtain official corroboration of his statements. References are also made

to services rendered since the 1914–18 War and services on the North-West Frontier.

It was in Clause 26 of the Memorandum that the Aga Khan rallied his forces for the attack. 'It was the intention of the then Government' (April, 1916) he wrote, 'that I should enjoy the immunities and privileges appertaining to the status of a Ruling Chief of the First Class, including freedom from liability to civil suits or attendance in the Law Courts; from assessment to Income Tax and from Custom revenue on goods imported for my own use.'

It will be recalled that earlier in this biography it was related that the Aga Khan had in 1916 been given the status of a Ruling Chief of the First Class, as a reward for the services he had rendered the British Crown, but so far as to the intentions of the British Government that raised the Aga Khan to this status, the Aga Khan referred the Viceroy to Sir George Lowndes, then Legal Member of the Council of India, for confirmation.

The Aga Khan asserted that Sir George could testify that what he wrote was indeed the intention of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. 'But,' added the Aga Khan bitterly, 'when the War was over, my services were forgotten by the then political authorities, and other views were held. I was informed that although I possess the status of a Ruling Chief, the rights and immunities of the status could not be afforded me in the absence of actual territorial sovereignty.'

It is curious to find this so-often envied potentate in an entirely new role, that of the forgotten man, but there is no reason to doubt the genuine bitterness of the Aga Khan's feelings. Whether he perhaps unconsciously exaggerated the importance of the services his grandfather and himself rendered is not the point at all, because he so truly believed—and still believes that he had been wilfully frustrated.

The next clause makes its meaning perfectly clear, for the Aga

Khan wrote: 'This decision made the new dignity an empty one. Your Excellency will, I know, permit me to say that I felt, and have never ceased to feel, aggrieved that the anticipations I was warranted in forming did not materialise and that the honour was a shadow with no substance behind it.'

Here once again one senses the bitterness that the Aga Khan had stored up over the years. This then was the meaning of Sir Samuel Hoare's curt replies in the House of Commons: there could be no rights to the newly acquired status because the Aga Khan did not possess territorial rights, territorial rights that would have, in effect, given him the extra-territorial rights he was seeking. A vicious circle if ever there was one.

The Aga Khan, continuing his list of grievances, set out that neither he nor any 'responsible person' had ever pointed out any valid reason for going back on the assurance given 'by so sincere and fine-minded a Viceroy as Lord Chelmsford'.

The Aga Khan quite dramatically declared that now he was making a 'definite request' that the gap between an official intention and the making good of that intention that had existed for nearly twenty-three years should now be bridged. Then the Aga Khan began to show what was nearest his heart, the territorial rights so far as they affected his heirs.

'It is the more important', he wrote, 'that the injustice of non-compliance with a definite decision should be remedied from it being conceivable that my heirs, if not myself, may be subjected to annoyance and attack by possibly unfriendly local governments in the future, by way of penalising the loyalty of my House to the British Government for a century past. The risk is not negligible in a country where false evidence can be manufactured only too freely.'

The meaning of the foregoing statement is only too clear. Despite the War clouds that were becoming darker and darker, the Aga Khan undoubtedly saw that History as regards India

would once again repeat itself. Just as the 1914–18 War had had certain repercussions in India and had forced the Lloyd George Government to make promises of concessions, so would the coming War have its repercussions in India and force the British Government of the day to make other concessions to Indians. Moreover, the author of *India in Transition*, who had made such startlingly correct forecasts, was reasonably certain that his own dream of a Federated India under the British Crown would now never materialise. Therefore, so he rightly or wrongly deduced, if not he, certainly whichever of his sons succeeded him, would risk being penalised because their forebears had stood by the British Raj.

It may perhaps be thought that in this particular instance the Aga Khan made an overstatement. By implication it could be deduced that only his family, or his House as he calls it, was completely and totally loyal to the King-Emperor. Perhaps that was indeed his meaning.

With the Aga Khan, as has been shown, there is nearly always a nicely adjusted balance between the spiritual and the materialistic side of life. Nowhere is this point better illustrated that in the 1938 Memorandum, for the next clauses deal with the financial aspects of his appeal.

'On obtaining exemption from Income Tax assessment,' he wrote, 'I am ready to give an annual contribution to Indian Defence expenditure, the equivalent of my existing liability, so long as I remain in the enjoyment of a reasonable approximation to my present resources. The essence of the matter is that this should be a free gift, not an extraction.'

This was no doubt a very shrewd offer from a very shrewd man. Reduced to the lowest common multiple it meant: if my Income Tax assessment is not raised and so long as my income from present sources is not touched, I will go on paying Income Tax, but you must cease making demands for it.

One presumes that the Aga Khan's remarks were intended to refer to India only. He was naturally not concerning Lord Linlithgow with his taxes payable outside India, any more than he was referring to his income from any extraneous source; India and India alone was in the picture. But one must wonder whether what may be called the financial clauses were intended to be, if necessary, separated from the rest of the Memorandum or whether they formed a cast iron and integral part of it. Yet one feels that the Aga Khan in 1938 did not foresee the comparatively early severance of India from the British Crown, otherwise he would have realised that whatever concessions the Crown made in his favour, none would have been binding on the India that is, a very different place from the India he knew and had known for so many years.

The remainder of the Memorandum is not without its pathos. It is the heart cry of a disappointed father who is trying to present his firstborn in the best possible light, but realising all the time that this son has never quite come up to his expectation.

The Aga Khan explains to Viceroy Linlithgow that Ali was a 'mere child' in 1916 (he was indeed six years of age) when he himself was engaged on diplomatic missions. Obliquely, the Aga Khan is saying that his son was robbed of a father's care, because the father was engaged on Government work. Now, said the Aga Khan, Ali is a member of the British Bar and is taking an interest in political and international affairs. It is possible that when the Aga Khan wrote his 1938 Memorandum in London that fateful October, his son Ali was taking the interest his fond father claimed, but one must join issue with the Aga Khan about his son Ali being a member of the British Bar.

The Ali Khan became a student member of Lincoln's Inn, December, 1929, but he has never 'kept term' or 'eaten his dinners', in fact, he has never been 'called to the Bar'.

The conclusion of the Memorandum has somewhat of an ugly

sound to it. The Aga Khan wrote that if Ali succeeds him without the title of His Highness and maintains a residence in India, he might rank lower than those who acknowledge his spiritual leadership. The matter ends with the statement that if the Aga Khan's plea was not granted, Ali might 'make his home elsewhere in the Islamic world'.

This final statement is perhaps a little obscure; one wonders whether a threat is implied. But yet, one may ask, when exactly *did* the Ali Khan make his home in the 'Islamic world'?

From birth he has been a rover, and his appearances in his Indian Palace have been most infrequent. At the age of forty-two the Ali Khan is a man of no fixed address.

Perhaps what the Aga Khan intended to imply was that if his older son succeeds and remains plain Mr. Ali Solomon Khan, then he might cut himself entirely adrift from India and establish the Imamat in some other country where, say, France and not Britain had control. As matters have materialised in India, this point has become purely academic. Apart from a certain sentimental interest, the whole affair ceased to have importance to the British Crown. When the second Aga Khan appeal met with the same fate as the first, one can well imagine his chagrin and disappointment, but although he feels that the British Raj has behaved badly towards him, he could, one supposes, believe that if the Ali Khan does succeed him as Imam, and provided the non-spiritual side of his life does not become too colourful, a British Government would confer the courtesy title of Highness on him, just as it was conferred on his father, but the Aga Khan might be well advised if he persuaded his followers from calling his sons, daughters-in-law and grandsons by titles to which they have no legal claim.

The double rejection of his appeals caused resentment that has showed itself in one way particularly, the question of citizenship.

In 1942 the Aga Khan obtained German permission to cross

German occupied France, as will presently be related. Pétain had dismissed all the Third Republic Departmental Prefects. According to the new Prefect of the Department of the Var, the Aga Khan called on him and said he no longer wished to be considered a British subject; he wished to be known as an Indian subject.

October 10th, 1949, Reuter's Correspondent at Teheran stated that the Persian Cabinet had declared the Aga Khan to be a Persian subject—at his own request.

In Paris the Aga Khan was interviewed and asked whether the statement was correct. The Aga Khan said: 'I am a British subject, but also a Persian subject, why not? A man can have twenty nationalities.'

One wonders.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE AGA KHAN AT HOME

FOR A MAN of such immense wealth as the Aga Khan one could say that he leads a life far less ostentatious than many who have not a tithe of his worldly goods. It is only since the last War that there has been, as we shall later see, a suggestion of the traditional life of an Oriental potentate connected with his mode of living. The consensus of the opinions of millionaires is that a steam yacht represents the acme of extravagance and is the most expensive hobby known to men of wealth. Such was the opinion of the late S. B. Joel, the late Jefferson D. Cohn and others who experimented and gave up yachting. Lord Beaverbrook twice chartered yachts but never owned one outright. A former acquaintance of the Aga Khan, the last Khedive of Egypt, owned a yacht which was usually to be found in Cannes harbour, but the ex-Khedive could well afford this luxury. During the last War at a time when it appeared as if the Germans might occupy the whole of France, as they did eventually, the late Lord Furness, the late Mr. Phillips Oppenheimer and the late Herr Fritz Thyssen asked the ex-Khedive to let them charter his yacht—they were all staying in Cannes. The ex-Khedive refused. They then offered to buy the yacht outright, but the ex-Khedive said testily: 'I don't need money. The British Government pays me £30,000 a year, Income Tax free.' One wonders what sort of deal the Aga Khan would have put through—if he had owned a yacht.

But the Aga Khan, who no doubt could afford the luxury of yachts, has never indulged such a fancy. In point of fact, his extravagances, if any, are not known. His racing he rightly regards as a good investment. His running of his one-man-controlled Welfare State is carried out on strictly business lines,

as has been shown: there is no wastage there, no extravagance. As a non-smoker, he buys cigars only for his guests, and his consumption of wines, though limited to the best, both for himself and for his friends, is by no means heavy.

Apart from the renting of furnished houses in England for very special occasions, His Highness has not any other similar commitment. It has been his custom since many years to rent a furnished villa at Deauville for the summer. He has his Palaces in India, but they being rarely visited cost very little in upkeep. While he was a widower, between the time of the death of his second wife and his marriage to his third wife, the Aga Khan had a simple enough villa at Cimiez on the hills above Nice. Here he lived in somewhat sybaric style, but it was dignified and not ostentatious.

Even when one lunched alone with him there the meal was simple, perfectly chosen and served by a maid who looked as if she had just stepped off the stage of an Edwardian musical comedy: frilly lace cap and apron, short black skirt and black silken stockings.

One sat at a long refectory table. The Aga Khan sat on one side, his guest or guests opposite him. Along the centre of the table would be tall gold vases in which were long stemmed red roses. On the table, at the right hand of the host, would be a little plastic memo pad on which the menu was written. As each course was presented, the host mentally checked it. If it were something for which the guest did not care, ice pudding perhaps, the Aga Khan would say: 'Would you prefer some strawberries?' The guest assenting, the Aga Khan would clap his hands, a touch of the Caliph, and say to the maid: 'M. X would like some strawberries.' No matter if it were winter, the genie in a matter of seconds would bring a box of strawberries seemingly of phenomenal appearance and certainly of appealing taste. Incidentally, the Aga Khan is himself a great lover of ice cream in all sorts of

ways. When Mr. John Gunther described him as being the greatest consumer of ice cream in the world, he was perhaps not exaggerating, although one wonders how the estimate was achieved.

With a change of state, when the widower became a husband again, there was a marked change in his way of living; it became more homely.

The first house he owned following his third marriage, was a villa named Jeanne-Andrée, the name of his wife. It is on the left hand side of the Boulevard du Cap d'Antibes, a few minutes from Eden Roc Hotel. This was not a large house but a very comfortable one. The garden was beautiful. 'We are completely happy here,' said the Begum one day, 'my husband loves flowers and we have both worked in this garden side by side till none can tell who planted which rose bush. So it is with other things in life.' Sometimes the Begum's sister, who had been her business partner, would be staying there with her husband who said he was a relative of the Aga Khan's late wife, the Italian. One would perhaps meet Mr. R. C. Dawson, who had formerly trained the Aga Khan's horses in England. Meals were always excellent and were always prepared under the personal supervision of the Begum who used to go into the kitchen herself to savour the dishes to be sure they were to her husband's taste.

The Aga Khan's days were fully occupied, but happily so. Part of the morning would be taken up with Miss Blain and his mail. Then he would be driven over either to the golf course at Mougins, which at one time he practically owned, or to Mandelieu, just outside of Cannes. Here he either played alone or with a professional, always striving to improve his handicap of twelve with an eye to winning an Open Championship.

At golf as in life generally, the Aga Khan is inclined to be a little suspicious, he knows quite well that people have a knack of saying and doing things to and for gentlemen of wealth which

they think will please them. Although the Aga Khan was as keen as keen could be to keep down his handicap, he would never allow his score to be improved by any means other than those that were part and parcel of the Royal and Ancient Game.

George Duncan, the former professional golfer, tells a perfectly true story of a round of golf with the Aga Khan. Perhaps a little to his surprise, he holed out in one, and on a hidden green. But he knew well enough that caddies sometimes, when carrying for a rich player, arrange with another caddy to station himself near a hidden hole, drop a ball in the cup when he hears the other confederate shout 'Fore', and then disappear.

When at first the Aga Khan was told he had made the classic but rare stroke he would not entirely believe it. He held his own private inquest on the matter, to see whether the ball that had accomplished the coup was verily his. He decided finally that indeed it was, so then, as Duncan relates, there was champagne galore and reward for the honest caddy.

Back from golf, the Aga Khan would partake of a rewarding lunch at which the conversation would roam over a variety of subjects and certainly embrace the particular 'line' of each guest.

At table the Aga Khan would be as merry as could be, while at the same time he would have his eyes all round the table to see that every guest was well served. The Indian manservant would be passing a dish of, say, halved cold lobsters. If the host thought a guest had not helped himself to a suitable specimen, he would rise from his chair and with an 'excuse me, don't take that one, take this one,' himself make the exchange.

After lunch, one would sit in the drawing-room drinking coffee. The Aga Khan would perhaps open a bottle of what he declared to be genuine 'pre-War' Chartreuse or some such famous liqueur. He always wanted information from his guests about whatever the popular indoor game of the moment was, back-gammon, mah jong or canasta, but with a glance at his watch he

would rise suddenly and say 'good-bye' and one would not see him again. He had gone up to his bedroom to take off all his clothes and go to bed for two hours. Then downstairs for tea, he would afterwards start work again with his secretary, dealing with the hundred and one most varied aspects of his exciting life.

A few years before the second War the Aga Khan purchased a house in Paris, in the Rue Scheffer, off the Avenue Henri Martin, where he spent not more than a few months each year. His way of life did not change. Not far away, in the Rue de la Faisanderie, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor rented a furnished house for two years. They spent large sums of money on structural alterations and had furnishings which belonged to the Duke when he lived in England sent across to Paris. The Windsors had a staff of sixteen servants, including two private secretaries, one for the Duke and one for the Duchess. The Windsors never spent more than three months a year in their house.

In the Rue Scheffer the Aga Khan, the multimillionaire Oriental potentate, was content with a domestic staff of six, all French, with the exception of one male Indian servant.

When in Paris the Aga Khan was a keen party goer and party giver; although his former wife and his present wife dance, he never did, despite an American story told about him, making him say: 'I can't understand you Europeans, dancing yourselves. In the East we hire women to do that for us.' Often when in Paris and when able to make his way about with greater ease than he does to-day, he would take afternoon tea, what the French call *le five o'clock*, at a well-known tea shop in the Rue Cambon. When a little younger, Ali Khan used to accompany his father and eat as hearty a tea as any English schoolboy. But his father could always keep pace with him, because, like most Orientals, he adores sweet cakes and, indeed, sweetmeats of all kinds.

THE AGA KHAN AT HOME

One of the most endearing qualities of the Aga Khan is his perfect adaptability. He can make himself quite at home in any circumstances. When he was President of the Annual Assembly of the League of Nations, in 1934, the year the King made him a Privy Councillor, he gave a party in Geneva for 3,000 guests. 1,500 bottles of champagne were consumed. The party cost him £3,000. Yet if one told him—as I have done—that one has found a *bistro* on the Quai des Etats Unis at Nice where they make a most magnificent *bouillabaisse*, a humble enough spot where the darned tablecloths cover a half-dozen tables on the sidewalk, he will as like as not be found lunching there the following day, digging a metal fork into a tender piece of crayfish swimming in a soup made with saffron and garlic.

His Highness has no phobia against eating in public, as had the late Lord Northcliffe, for example. When perforce he had to attend a banquet, he had a meal at home before he went out to eat, so at the banquet he could sit toying with his food and so gained the reputation of being a poor trencherman. The Aga Khan is the very opposite. He will go anywhere where he believes the food to be good, and the public places do not worry him in the least. For all he cares, anyone can see him at his meal.

He likes people and he particularly likes children. He is a good, if over-indulgent father, and a nice, kind grandfather. But people should never mistake his seemingly easygoing manner at home or abroad. Anyone who ever tried to 'take a liberty' with him has regretted it.

CHAPTER XIX

THE AGA KHAN: PACIFIST

IN CONVERSATION WITH the Aga Khan in the years immediately prior to the last War there was nothing to indicate that his sentiments were undergoing any change. Not by any outward sign either did he show that he had discarded the martial ardour he displayed on the outbreak of the Boer War and of the 1914–18 War when he expressed his wish to go to the Front as an interpreter with the Indian Field Ambulance section to whom he addressed his wish. The man who had said he would shed his 'last drop of blood for the British Empire' had increased in girth and age but his intelligent questioning of those who he thought might have inside information concerning the suspected sinister intentions of Messrs. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini gave not the slightest indication that the firebrand of those earlier years had become a Pacifist at almost any price.

But His Highness's concept of Hitler's probable military strategy proved eventually to be the correct one. In the closing weeks of 1936, with those who believed that Hitler would first turn East and not West, the Aga Khan agreed, but to those who believed Hitler would first attack Poland and then march on Russia with his left wing advancing through Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, the Aga Khan smilingly opposed his conception: first Austria, then Czecho-Slovakia, then Poland. It was while he was talking thus in Europe that in India yet another personal attack was being made on him by the spokesman of the Khoja Reform Party, Karim Goolamali.

Mr. Goolamali printed another Open Letter in Karachi, this time addressed to His Excellency Sir Lancelot Graham, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Governor of Sind (the Province wherein the Aga Khan had sought territory). The Letter is dated March 31st,

1937, and a copy of it may be seen in the British Museum Library.

Mr. Goolamali makes the astonishing claim that the Khoja Community consists of no more than '60,000 souls' who, says the writer, impoverished themselves by providing funds for 'Dhani-Salamat-Dattar' which is the name of the Aga Khan when he is known as a god. Mr. Goolamali writes: 'The Aga Khan claims descent from the Prophet Mohammed (peace be on him) but this claim is merely based on legendary tales and is disproved by history.' The writer says that the so-called religious ceremonies are all a series of contrivances designed to fill the coffers of the Aga Khan and to keep his followers in a state of mental and spiritual bondage to him. 'These ceremonies are freely adaptable by the spiritual head, as more cunning and effective means of raising funds can be devised . . . the Aga Khan has proved himself a genius in this respect.'

'Many murders and murderous assaults', writes Mr. Goolamali, 'on Khoja reformers have been tried by British Law Courts (in India) but although the criminals have been duly punished, some with the extreme penalty, yet the person or persons behind the scenes have never been brought to book.

'One would wish the public probed deeper into this hoax, which would be clear to any man with common sense; it amounts to nothing short of the angler's investment of venturing a small fish to catch a big one.'

Referring to another means of raising funds for the Aga Khan's Welfare State, something known as 'Vado Kam' (Great Work), Mr. Goolamali writes: 'All those who wish to be initiated into its mystery have to pay from 75 rupees to 500 rupees, according to various grades.'

As usual with him, the Aga Khan appeared to have ignored this attack which incidentally seems to have been the last made from this quarter. Perhaps in India some steps were taken, steps of

which the echoes did not reach the Western world, or maybe the mantle of pacifism which was now enveloping the Aga Khan was not pierced by the Goolamali thrust.

There is yet another strong possibility; the Aga Khan was so hypnotised by Hitler that nothing else mattered.

It was in October, 1937, that Britain was a little startled to read that the Aga Khan had been travelling in Nazi Germany and that it had found much favour in his eyes. In Berlin he spent an hour or so with Dr. Goebels to whom he expressed interest in what he had seen in Germany. Later, the Aga Khan remarked 'nowhere in Germany did I see a hungry man.' His Highness, of course, was among a number of well-known people such as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the late Lady Snowdon and the late Lord Rothermere, all of whom found praise for Adolf Hitler; the Duke and Duchess were particularly graciously inclined and the Duke told a Paris luncheon party that 'Hitler had a very intelligent look in his eyes,' even though Hitler had kept the Duke and Duchess waiting for two hours before he received them at Berchtesgaden.

To Berchtesgaden went the Aga Khan for an audience that turned out more comic than serious.

The conversation turned to horse-racing, and proceeded as follows:

Hitler: How much would I have to pay for one of your stallions?

Aga Khan: About £30,000.

Hitler, jumping up in surprise: WHAT!

Then

Hitler: Would you take forty of my motor-cars for one of your stallions?

Aga Khan: What would I do with forty motor-cars? Do you think I want to open a showroom in Piccadilly?

Despite this unpromising exchange of courtesies, His Highness remarked after the meeting: 'Hitler is a very great man.'

Now that statement may well be the key to a change in a code of behaviour, although perhaps it is more just to regard it as a pendant to His Highness's feeling of grievance against the British Government for reasons already set forth in a previous chapter. On the other hand, if the Aga Khan's summing up of Hitler's character is to be regarded as a summing up by a man who makes claims to statesmanship, then one must inevitably compare His Highness's summing up of the late Kaiser Wilhelm with his summing up of Hitler. 'The Kaiser,' said the Aga Khan, 'is certainly a great man.' Then, thirty years later, 'Hitler is a very great man.'

The Aga Khan is one of the very few men alive to-day who in their adult years had audiences with Kaiser and Fuhrer, and are so able to draw their own conclusions as to which man was the 'greater'. One knows that the Kaiser thought that the Aga Khan would be useful to him, but, as matters turned out, it was the Aga Khan who obtained useful concessions from the Kaiser. It is, one must believe, safe to assume that Hitler had he proved victorious would also have tried to make use of the Aga Khan, but when the two met in the Bavarian crow's nest, the time was not yet ripe, but he certainly made sure of the Aga Khan as a most useful convert to his particular brand of pacifism, as we shall see.

Back in Berlin the Aga Khan was entertained by his followers in a private room decorated with swastikas and German flags. A photograph of this event was published in London and caused not a little painful surprise. The Aga Khan wrote to the editor saying that the decorations were already there and were not put up especially for the meeting. Editorial comment was that the meeting might have been held elsewhere.

May 26th, 1938, the Aga Khan made a statement to a London

newspaper, saying: 'I am an old-fashioned Democrat, neither a Fascist, Nazi nor Communist, but the only way Democracy can survive will be through organisation and planning, like in Germany and in Italy. Whether Germany is inside or outside the League of Nations—she is a pillar of peace.'

Such statements were the proverbial straws in the wind and it was perhaps only to be expected that sooner or later the Aga Khan would nail his colours to a mast of a ship flying a different flag to the ship that carried his colours in 1899 and 1914.

Came October, 1938; came Munich; came the Aga Khan as an enthusiastic Muncheneer.

October 19th, 1938, *The Times* published one of its famous 'turn over' articles entitled:

PEACE OR TRUCE
A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE
'THE BASIS FOR WORLD SECURITY'
BY H.H. THE AGA KHAN.

'Peace prevails', the article opened, 'thanks to the wisdom of the Prime Minister and those who loyally supported him in the Cabinet and the country. What about the future?'

The future, as seen by His Highness at that time, seemed full of rosy promise. He opined that world peace could be founded on an Anglo-French Alliance that would place the resources of either country at the disposal of the other in the event of an unprovoked attack. His Highness, somewhat surprisingly for a man who had so recently visited Germany, entirely passed over the fact that Anglo-French resources were no match for Germany's armed forces. 'One hears', wrote the Aga Khan, 'two opinions whether or not Germany and her Chancellor can be trusted to keep the peace. The question of trust is irrelevant.' The late Lord Rothermere, who shared the Aga Khan's enthusiasm for Hitler, did not share His Highness's opinion as to irrelevancy.

The Press magnate wrote that he trusted Hitler to the limit. History proved both enthusiasts wrong.

But the Aga Khan was the more wrong of the two.

The Aga Khan then set out to prove that Germany would not resort to War because such was not to Germany's interest and, in passing, affirmed that Hitler's annexation of Austria was 'an historical necessity'.

'The substance of German unity is now achieved', wrote the Aga Khan. 'What is still outstanding? Eupen, Malmédy and Schleswig are so small that no sane person can imagine a world war for these areas. Poland? Herr Hitler's greatest triumph, the foundation of all his later successes, was his prompt understanding with Poland. . . . Danzig will probably come under direct Reich administration by an amicable arrangement with Poland, and a similar accord probably awaits Memel. But it is inconceivable that such settlements could cause a world war.'

It is likewise inconceivable that a man with the Aga Khan's unique contacts could have been so completely at fault in his considered judgement, so much so that even fourteen years later one is practically forced to the conclusion that what used to be called 'wishful thinking' caused the Aga Khan, like Homer, to nod.

After Poland, the Aga Khan reviewed the problems of Alsace-Lorraine, the Channel ports and the former German colonies and satisfied himself that none was a *casus belli*. Regarding the colonies, His Highness wrote: 'We all know that Germany will ask for colonies. But can she use aggressive methods to obtain them? To conquer and keep colonies she would have to be stronger than England and France combined at sea. . . . As long as colonies are owned by other countries it is impossible to deny permanently Germany's right to share the white man's burden. As an Asiatic I have no sympathy with the "white man's burden" theory. I consider it the coloured man's burden, after the model of

Sinbad the Sailor. . . . Merely to return one or other of the old colonies is no solution. This matter must be tackled with boldness and vision'.

His Highness then turned to what he named 'a few practical suggestions' to prevent 'the glorious victory for peace with honour won by the Prime Minister [at Munich] degenerating into a truce.'

There should be a treaty of non-aggression between Germany and France on one side, and Great Britain and Germany on the other. 'Furthermore, a complete understanding with Italy in respect of Mediterranean interests and safeguarding her communications with her African Empire.'

'This would naturally be followed by qualitative and quantitative disarmament, mutually agreed, and guarantees of one another's frontiers and colonies.'

When this long article came into *The Times* office and had been read by the gentleman who was Editor at that time, he turned to Sir Frank Brown and said, 'What a wise old bird the Aga Khan is'. But it should be remembered that in 1938 the editorial policy of *The Times* and the opinion of the Aga Khan coincided perfectly. But a mental inquest held on His Highness's Munich article clearly reveals a strong bias in favour of the Berlin-Rome Axis. The Aga Khan, of course, was by no means alone in his support of Hitler and Mussolini, but one wonders whether when War came, eleven months after the publication of his article, he felt more disillusioned than most?

The outbreak of War found His Highness living at Antibes and writing to Sir Frank Brown in London complaining of hard times and of how the War was upsetting his arrangements. He complained, too, bitterly, that he was unable to obtain money from India or Egypt. He added that in all probability he would be leaving for India. On the outbreak of War His Highness had sent this message 'to my brothers in India and other British

Dominions: To-day a cruel war has been imposed, and it is our duty to co-operate with heart and soul for the success of His Majesty the King-Emperor. Such a sincere and complete co-operation will also be the best service to Islam. I beg my brothers in Islam to realise alike that our secular duties and our best way of serving Moslem interests is by completely loyal co-operation with His Majesty's Government. Both my grown-up son and myself have placed all our personal services at the Viceroy's disposal.'

It is possible that the Viceroy either did not receive the offer or perhaps he did not reply to it, but this would appear most unlikely. At all events, as we have seen, the Ali Khan, although a Territorial Officer in a British regiment, preferred to serve as a French officer in Syria, while his father spent most of the War in Switzerland.

In point of fact, his movements caused some mystery and no little confusion.

When France fell the Aga Khan managed to reach Zurich, travelling from Antibes. The Begum and his younger son went with him. The Swiss Government, no doubt recalling His Highness's activities in Switzerland during the previous War, imposed the condition that he must abstain from taking part in any political activity.

Soon after the Germans entered Paris, wild rumours began to circulate in London, where it was published that the Aga Khan was in Paris fraternising with the Germans and giving parties for them in his house. This, of course, was ridiculous and untrue. In 1940 the Aga Khan did go to India. He did not stay there long, however, and quite mysteriously he managed to return to Europe and once again reached Switzerland, although Switzerland was by then a neutral country entirely surrounded by countries inimical to Britain and British subjects.

In an interview published in a London morning newspaper

June 19th, 1942, the Aga Khan was reported to have said to that newspaper's Zurich Correspondent: 'I will never set foot on any German occupied territory. The only way to get me there would be as a prisoner.'

What the Aga Khan did not disclose, however, was that some months previously, in February, 1941, he had indeed 'set foot' on German-occupied territory. The Germans, for reasons no doubt best known to themselves, gave His Highness permission to motor across German occupied France into un-occupied France to visit his estate at Antibes and to return to Switzerland.

His Highness was a very sad man; the man whose slightest wish and whim had been law was now just an outcast on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean. Winter on the French Riviera was always charming, but it can be very cold indeed when the sun goes down, but in normal times there was plenty of fuel and plenty of food; in this winter of His Highness's discontent there was neither food nor fuel. He went to his villa on Cap d'Antibes where there was an elderly couple, caretakers, and his major domo, his brother-in-law, Signor Magliano, brother of his dead Italian wife. Even the non-Fascist Italians were very belligerent now that the brave Italians had stabbed France in the back. There was no heat in the villa. The Aga Khan wanted heat, but his brother-in-law said 'no', so the multimillionaire left his luxurious villa and went to stay at the humble Hotel Josse where his secretary Miss Blain used to lodge in those far-off fabulous days of plenty.

There was nothing to eat except poor rations and what could be procured in black market restaurants.

The Aga Khan went to Nice and found written across the pavements in big white letters

DEATH TO CHURCHILL!

He went to Cannes, that little fishing village that Lord

Brougham had caused to be transformed into a tourist town of luxury and renown. Grateful townspeople had erected a statue opposite the Casino, to the memory of *Milord*. The statue was now smashed into hundreds of pieces.

Nearby there used to be a statue of the Aga Khan's friend, Edward VII, in yachting costume, looking across to Monte Carlo. The statue was unveiled by President Poincaré, in 1926. Now in February, 1941, when His Highness looked at it, he found it had shared the fate of Lord Brougham's statue, smashed to smithereens by some of our former gallant allies, the French.

The Aga Khan thought he would like a game of golf, at Mougins, that famous 'Millionaires' Club', but he found it closed. His Highness ordered the Secretary, Colonel Carlton, to have it opened, but the Colonel had other business on hand; he was planning to escape to England, and he did escape, so Mougins Golf Club remained closed, to the chagrin of the Aga Khan. However, the journey had a certain sentimental interest which some little time later reached a satisfactory conclusion.

His Highness returned to Switzerland, a country which compared with the Riviera was a land of plenty.

Four months later, November, 1942, a London evening newspaper reported that the Begum and her son Sadruddin were held by the police at Annemasse while attempting to return to Switzerland from France.

No explanation was given; indeed there was no further news of His Highness until there came news of his divorce from the Begum, then news of his fourth marriage, to another French lady, a Mademoiselle Yvette Labouresse. Her age was given as thirty-eight, that of the bridegroom, sixty-eight.

The bride was said to have been a dressmaker in Lyons and had been 'Queen of Lyons' and had also been elected 'Miss France' in 1930. It was claimed on her behalf that she had rejected many film offers. She was, in point of fact, the daughter of a Cannes

railway porter. Speaking to a friend of her husband's family concerning her male parent, Her Highness said: 'My father had no ambition; he could have been a station master.' Concerning her own ambition, when she was 'Miss France', the present Begum told reporters: 'My ambition is to meet a nice young man who will love me.' Her Highness's only defeasance was over the matter of the age of her Prince Charming who most certainly adores her. She is undoubtedly the prettiest of all his four wives and like her European predecessors was sent to a finishing school by her husband; her earlier education having been obtained at a Council School.

The house where the couple live now, at Le Cannet, outside Cannes was being built for her before her marriage. The name of the house is 'Yakymour'. Yaky is the Aga Khan's pet name for his wife. The 'mour', of course, is the second syllable of *amour*.

It may be remembered that the Mayor of Aix-les-Bains who married His Highness to his first French wife achieved unenviable notoriety as a collaborator with the Germans. His Highness was married to his fourth wife, the present Begum, in Switzerland, in an hotel at Vevey. There was a Moslem ceremony the following day. The principal witness at the civil wedding was a Mr. Julian Grand, a Galician Pole naturalised as a British citizen, who although for many years domiciled in Switzerland, in the pre-War years rendered yeoman service to the Japanese as a propagandist. He called it 'objective writing'. Some years previous to those exploits, Mr. Grand had been to India at the behest of the Aga Khan. But His Highness was always seeking to do good for India. When the late Dr. Voronoff was at the height of his fame, the Aga Khan sent him to India, not to perform monkey gland operations on Indians, but to seek to restore youthful and useful activity to elderly Indian rams.

CHAPTER XX

AGA KHAN: CALIPH OF CANNES

WHEN THE AGA KHAN and the Begum visited Pretoria, South Africa, in 1946, two years after their wedding, the Khoja Community there, which owes not a little of its financial prosperity to the shrewd advice of His Highness, produced an illustrated volume in honour of the visit. Much of the praise, compliment and flattery, such as reference to a mythical visit to India paid by the Begum accompanied by her parents, cannot well have been pleasing to the Aga Khan, but his sense of humour must have been tickled by the last line in a list of notable events in his life.

The list begins in 1885 when on August 17th he assumed the leadership of the Ismailis. It passes by way of the many honours conferred on him; it records his marriages and the births of his sons, also his outstanding Turf successes. It ends: '1947, "Citizen of Honour," Cannes.'

In the last chapter one read how in 1941 the Aga Khan paid a brief visit to wartime Cannes and saw how the noble *Cannois* were behaving to their once honoured visitors, including the spoliation of the memory of the man who 'made' Cannes. Now, five years later, here he was again, not only basking in Riviera sunshine, but with a new house, a new wife and a new honour!

It is perhaps not surprising that a 'personage of noble rank and title' such as the Aga Khan should accept honours as they come, perhaps without the discernment that one sometimes finds among less exalted personages. A notable example of this liberal-minded acceptance of honours occurred some two years after the conferring of the honorary citizenship of Cannes on the Aga Khan. The present Shah of Persia made it known that he desired to confer a high Persian Order on His Highness and requested His

Highness's presence for that purpose in Teheran. Ordinarily such a decision would not arouse anything but the most favourable comment. Nearly fifty years previously, in 1900, the Sultan of Zanzibar had conferred the Order of the Brilliant Star on the Aga Khan, but this projected Persian honour was something very different.

As has been related, the father of the present Shah was a commoner who became known as Reza Shah. He seized the Persian Throne and unseated the reigning Shah, who came of a long line of Persian Royalty, an ancient dynasty. Not only that: the dethroned Shah was actually a cousin of His Highness the Aga Khan. It must have required moral courage and supreme disregard for public opinion to have accepted a national honour from the son of the man who had dethroned his cousin.

In 1951 His Highness was asked to put forward his candidature for the Rectorship of a Scottish University. He accepted, but in racing parlance 'ran a bad second' to a Mr. James Edwards, a Radio comedian.

Attempts have been made in this book to illustrate the vivid personality of the Aga Khan as exemplified in the many facets of his long life. There was for many years a fairly even balance between his Eastern and Western lives, even though the swinging pendulum did perhaps tarry longer on its Western approach. But chroniclers of the Aga Khan's movements cannot help but remark that, with the approach of the third quarter of a century of his life, he appears to have decided to opt for the West while retaining as much as possible the memories of the ancient splendours of the East. There could, therefore, have been nothing more natural than His Highness's assuming, even subconsciously, the role of Caliph of Cannes, the man who simply by clapping his hands can summon genies to do his bidding, to conjure up such wonders as must have made Aladdin's eyes open wide when he first beheld the contents of the Magic Cave. But before relating

such stories of Arabian Nights Entertainment, it is the task of the biographer to recount the grave illnesses that so suddenly came upon the Aga Khan. But even in this accounting there creeps in a slight rubbing of the magic lamp.

The Aga Khan suffered from a dual affliction: prostate gland trouble and a non-malignant growth in the rectum. Considerable distress was caused to his family by reports published in London that he was suffering from cancer. There is no truth in such reports.

In July, 1947, the Aga Khan underwent an operation but was able a little later to go to Zanzibar to visit his followers there. Then in October of the same year he had a relapse and was said to be suffering 'from a serious internal hæmorrhage'. He was operated on in the American Hospital at Paris. In August, 1948, he had another relapse and there was another operation. In February, 1949, and again in October, he was very ill. In the early part of 1952 the Aga Khan visited India again but was taken very ill with a heart attack and had to return to Europe almost immediately. His son the Ali Khan flew out to India to deputise for his father. His visit was planned to last a month but he stayed only eight days.

The Ali Khan, while in Bombay, received tribute on his father's behalf amounting to approximately £30,000.

The Ali Khan, on his return, went to see his father at Le Cannet. Specialists flown in from Switzerland said His Highness was suffering from angina pectoris. During his convalescence he grew a beard and allowed his hair to grow long. The doctors told him that in future he would have to watch his diet. He commented: 'If one wishes to reach a ripe old age one should never eat eggs in restaurants!'

His very devoted secretary, Miss Freda Blain, worked for the Aga Khan since she was nineteen years old. She began her service in 1922 and worked with him wherever he was in Europe until

the War, when His Highness preferred to live in Switzerland. Miss Blain, who prefers her own country to any in the world, went into an airplane factory on the outbreak of War. This beautiful and cultured young woman learned her trade at the bench and rose to be a forewoman. As soon as the War was over the Aga Khan became most worried about his stud in Normandy and cabled Miss Blain asking her to make investigations. Although Miss Blain for her own personal reasons had decided to cease her service with His Highness, she could not turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of her former chief, so although there were no normal means of transport in Normandy, Miss Blain, who speaks French fluently, by enterprise and determination, riding a bicycle and obtaining lifts on haycarts, managed to reach the stud and arrange matters as well as they could be arranged. Then, when the Aga Khan lay dying in Switzerland in 1949, there was just one person he wanted to see, to put his affairs in order: Miss Blain.

All seats on all planes flying from London to Switzerland were booked. The Ali Khan and the Begum were with the dying man, so at the Aga Khan's wish, his son Ali chartered a Swiss plane and in it flew to London to fetch Miss Blain and fly back with her. Miss Blain, who has known all three of the Aga Khan's European wives, has known the Ali Khan since he was twelve. Now she is one of the trustees of his two sons by his first wife, the former Mrs. Joan Guiness, with whom she is on the same terms of warm friendship as she is with the Aga Khan's divorced wife, the former Paris dressmaker. Perhaps her presence in Lausanne brought back memories of his pre-War life; at any rate, when she saw he was dying she said the only way to save his life was to take him quickly up into the mountains. This was done and he did recover. Then he moved into his new life as Caliph of Cannes.

The Aga Khan has been called, perhaps not unjustly, 'The Man With a Load of Legends'. Most of those legends have been dismantled in this biography, but the residue, which is the truth,

plain and unvarnished, is as colourful as the legends. And yet, in fairness, one must admit that the life the Aga Khan has been leading since his recovery from his early post-War illnesses does lend itself to the growth of a fruitful crop of legends.

In the high summer of 1948 the Begum Yvette decided that she would like to go on safari to Africa. Her step-son, the Ali Khan, had spoken much about hunting trips in East Africa. But the Begum had no wish to kill big game. All the 'shooting' she wished to do could and would be done with cameras. It was not difficult to persuade her adoring husband, now seventy-one, to organise such a trip. His second son, Sadruddin, was home on vacation from Harvard and was staying with his father at Le Cannet. He would go along, too, with a few friends of his step-mother and, of course, the 'Caliph of Cannes'. A plane was chartered from Britain and ordered to fly to Marseilles to pick up the Aga Khan and his party. On board the plane were:

Six chickens;
Two turkeys;
An 8 lb. salmon;
Twelve tins of asparagus;
Five lbs. of smoked salmon.

At Marseilles a purchase was made of:

Caviare;
Foie gras;
Champagne;
Rose Water.

The party was to fly to Nairobi where the Begum had in the previous year been made a Moslem, when her husband conferred on her the name of Om Habibeh, meaning 'Mother of the Beloved'.

At Nairobi the Aga Khan, who was accompanied by his personal doctor and a nurse, found fourteen trucks of food, four

white servants, five white hunters and sixty native servants, including six cooks and six laundrymen. The Begum brought Paris dresses with her to the jungle camps, but the camps were fitted with electric light and porcelain baths with running hot and cold water.

Besides the champagne and *vins fines*, there were three hundred tins of fruit and canned vegetables. Fresh bread, fish, butter and eggs were flown in daily from Ariesla, some two hundred miles distant. It was a great pity, therefore, that after ten days, the trip which had cost several hundreds of thousands of pounds was abandoned. His Highness had fallen sick again.

Sometimes these scenes of Oriental splendour and magnificence had to be interrupted for visits abroad. In October, 1949, the Aga Khan was in London and was the central figure in a most mysterious and intriguing scene.

The tea lounge of the Ritz Hotel in Piccadilly was fitted up for a Moslem religious ceremony in which the Aga Khan took part. His Highness went from man to man, speaking to him. Suddenly he stopped and his voice rang out, loud and stern: 'This man is an interloper; he is not one of my followers. Have him ejected from the hotel immediately.'

Practically nothing was known as to the entry of the stranger, but it was understood that he was a person who had on at least one previous occasion sought to take part in a ceremony to which he had, apparently, no right.

It was in the summer of the same year when the London scene occurred that the Aga Khan and the Begum were the victims of a Hollywood film style hold-up robbery within a very short distance of their villa 'Yakymour'. The Aga Khan and his wife and a maid were driving off to the airport when masked men with guns held up the car and stole £43,000 worth of jewels the Begum had with her. Her 'Caliph' husband replaced them, of course, with a wave of his hand, but not before there

were many exciting *raportages* in the best detective-style newspaper stories.

The shock of the robbery did not prevent the Aga Khan playing a golf match at Deauville a little later. He had had a long outstanding challenge from an English retired major, who had lost a leg and become a racing journalist. The prize was to be a golf ball, but both participants had stayed very late in the Casino the previous night, so the match was abandoned after nine holes had been played.

It was perhaps an indirect result of his son's marriage to a film star that caused the Aga Khan's name to be so frequently associated with the film industry. It was reported that he and his son were to invest two-and-a-half million pounds in a famed Hollywood film concern but no details ever became known of this alleged 'deal'.

Although enjoying himself and making shrewd financial deals, as well as keeping a close eye on his racing interests in England, Ireland and France, religious duties call him fairly often. When Princess Fatima of Persia married Mr. Vincent Hillyer, of California, at the Persian Legation in Paris, the Aga Khan went there to attend the Moslem ceremony. Then from time to time he makes appeals for religious unity. One such appeal addressed to Moslems and Christians he made from Nice. His Highness said: 'I reaffirm [his previous appeal had been made from Cairo] my belief that Islam and Christianity should draw closer together in mutual respect. In my opinion Moslems are, in the main, willing, and Christians should now make a gesture.' But the real touch of the Caliph is never far away.

In December, 1947, one of the Aga Khan's followers, Emir Ismail Suleiman, stated in Damascus that the Aga Khan was prepared to 'buy Palestine for £30 million, in golden sovereigns' and would present the country to the Arabs.

Naturally, a flock of reporters descended on the Aga Khan's

villa at Le Cannet to question him about this Caliph-like gesture, but His Highness denied the report and no more was heard of it.

Although perhaps not over-generous towards people in his employment, the Aga Khan can and does make wonderful presents when the spirit moves him. When the Queen married, the Aga Khan's wedding present to her was a filly bred at his stud in Ireland; a filly named Astrakan, by Turkestan, out of Hastra.

In July, 1949, one of his trainers in England, Harry Wragg, bid 14,000 guineas at his patron's behest for a yearling which the Aga Khan presented to his wife.

The film motive once again entered the Aga Khan's life when it was announced that he had given permission for a film to be made, featuring his religious life. It was said that Mr. Michael Petree was to write the script; Paul Muni was to play the part of the Aga Khan, and a Mr. Alexander Salkind was to be the producer. There was to be an English version, only, and the scenes were to be 'shot' in India, Africa and France. It was added that His Highness was to loan a herd of elephants, although what a herd of elephants was doing in the Aga Khan's life was never explained.

Mr. Michael Petree informed me that when he heard of the plan he flew to Cannes at his own expense to see the Aga Khan, only to find that he was in Paris. So he flew to Paris, where the Aga refused to see him. 'Quite rightly,' Mr. Petree commented, 'because no contract had been signed.'

When the Aga Khan returned to Europe in 1951, after attending the Shah's wedding in Teheran, it was announced that he and the Ali Khan would be visiting London. They were expected at the Ritz, where their suites were as usual decked with red roses and azaleas, but they never came. The visit was cancelled at the last minute and no explanation was forthcoming.

That year, 1951, was the year that the 'Caliph of Cannes'

excelled himself in the magic he knows so well how to work. The man who married a railway porter's daughter and brought her to a life of luxury such as few women ever know, brought romance and luxury into the life of another girl of humble origin, a golf caddy at Cannes.

Marie Giraldo used to carry the Aga Khan's clubs at the Mougins golf links. She is a brunette, quite young and although perhaps not beautiful she is of the handsome type one so often finds in Provence and perhaps more particularly along the coast between Nice and the Italian frontier. She was a very quiet and well-behaved girl who seldom talked, but like many caddies, girls as well as boys, she picked up quite a knowledge of golf. Her reward from the Aga Khan was the most outstanding 'tip' any caddy has ever received.

His Highness gave her a little house and a two-seater motor-car. She no longer carries clubs. She lives in her little villa with her father and mother. Sometimes she drives herself down to the links where she used to work as a caddy and plays a few holes—alone.

Another glimpse of the Caliph of Cannes was discernible in February, 1952, when the Aga Khan purchased an estate on Cap d'Antibes for his son Sadruddin who is now probably the only Harvard undergraduate with a villa on the French Riviera. The house, with a large garden and private beach, is within hailing distance of his mother's villa, Jeanne-Andrée.

Verging on his seventy-sixth year, His Highness lives the life he no doubt prefers. He has a new secretary, an Englishwoman Miss Blain engaged for him. He plays golf occasionally, playing either alone or with visitors such as officers from the American Fleet, when it puts into French Riviera ports. Never since early years very interested in animals other than horses, His Highness is now interested in a blue Persian cat, called Simba (Lion) which he gave to his wife. Cannes, of course, is not what it was before

the War, although there is still some international Society, so the Aga Khan and the Begum still give parties. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor and their friends, such as Miss Elsa Maxwell, that indefatigable party organiser, are often guests when they are on the Riviera.

The Aga Khan still frequents Cannes Casino, but his gambling is never heavy; he began this New Year badly, however, losing £50 in less than half-an-hour. He has, of course, two consolations: the proverb about being unlucky at gambling and lucky in love; the second, that when he tosses a *jeton* on the green baize table, he can safely say to himself: 'There's plenty more where that one came from.'

CHAPTER XXI

CARNE, VALE!

A SEPTEMBER MOON shone on the Venetian scene. Her rays this night were particularly focused on the Palacio Labia, behind the Church of San Geremia and adjacent to the Ghetto Vecchio, the old Jewish quarter. Around the Labia Bridge close to the Palace a special service of police held back 10,000 people, mostly the poor of Venice, who had come to see the arrival of the 1,000 guests bidden by Don Carlos Beistequi to attend a costume ball in the Palace he had rented for the occasion. It was a veritable Venetian Carnival given in traditional style by a South American millionaire, a party to end all parties; particulars of the preparations for the party had been cabled round the world. It is possible that the police thought there might be angry demonstrations, but they had no trouble at all. The thousand guests were loudly acclaimed as they disembarked from their gondolas, but the first guest to arrive came in a wheeled chair. He wore a red domino and a white satin mask covered his face. It was His Highness the Aga Khan.

His Princess arrived a little later, in a magnificent Paris gown and covered in jewels, but it was Prince Charming and not Cinderella who at midnight left the ball. His Highness said, as he was wheeled away to his hotel: 'My wife will dance until dawn.'

It is not unfitting that one should take one's leave of the Aga Khan amidst such splendour as was to be found on this Venetian night in September, 1951, when the fleeting moments must have brought back to him the glories of his Edwardian days and nights, when, already a young man, he unexpectedly found the world at his feet. As from his wheeled chair he watched the dancers, he must have thought of the European beauties of past decades, to

many of whom he had shown favour and had been favoured in return.

One may wonder whether those who stood for hours outside envied the Indian Prince in his wheeled chair. His course looked perhaps as if it were nearly run, and yet, most likely none knew that in his hotel suite there lay a telegram from his followers in Karachi inviting him to be weighed on November 2nd, 1953, against platinum, in honour of his seventy-sixth birthday!

Among the many gifts of this Magi is one which enables him to celebrate a birthday whenever his followers choose. It is understood that some of his followers wanted to give him a birthday in January, 1951, but His Highness replied that he did not feel like a birthday just at that time.

In many ways the Aga Khan modernised his Western life, but in one particular he appears to cling closely to the very old-fashioned English plan of taking the waters 'after the Season'. So after the excitements of the *Carnaval de Venise*, His Highness took himself to Evian, on the French side of Lake Leman. He could look across the Lake to Geneva, the scene of so many of his triumphs.

The coastline of Switzerland must have brought back bitter-sweet memories of the past. Up at the top end of the Lake there is Lausanne, where so many webs of Oriental intrigue have been spun and unravelled. In many of these intrigues His Highness took a hand.

Switzerland has been the location of so many other scenes in His Highness's life. His present marriage was celebrated there—and he was divorced there; the breaking-up of what seemed a perfect union.

Certain friends of the family believe that there never would have been a divorce if the Aga Khan had not chosen to live in Switzerland during the War. All his life he has been an exceedingly active man, mentally and physically active. Wartime

Switzerland gave him no opportunity at all for activity. He was cut off from everything that had formerly interested him, moreover, for the first time in his life he did not have access to unlimited funds. Matters, it is said, 'got on his nerves', and probably His Highness had reason to note the aptness of Dorothy Parker's statement concerning Swiss scenery. It may be remembered that the American lady once said that the scenery of Switzerland was beautiful but dumb.

In Evian the Aga Khan made a confession. He said he was spending his Evian evenings listening to Mozart and Verdi recordings. 'Henceforth,' he said, 'my life is going to cease being like a Hollywood film. I shall now leave the Casinos to others. As for Ali, his life is his own affair. By now he should have learned to pick his wives as soundly as he picks his racehorses.'

But when His Highness went upstairs to bed and looked across Lake Leman and saw the lights of Geneva, he must have thought of his son Ali, for somewhere in Switzerland are Ali's two sons, the half-English grandsons of his own. There must have been thoughts too, of Ali's second marriage. Some friends of the Ali Khan begged Rita Hayworth not to marry him. 'He is charming,' they said, 'there is no nicer person, but he will never make any woman happy.'

But she would not listen. Those who severely criticise her may be interested to learn the terms of the marriage settlement.

There was no marriage settlement. The American wife of the Ali Khan (it is difficult to know how to name her; she is not a Princess, but her legal name of Mrs. Ali Solomon Khan somehow sounds silly) did not receive a penny from her husband.

In the twilight of his life the Aga Khan's relations with his older son are undoubtedly better than they have been for some time previously. There is not the slightest doubt that the two have a very great affection for one another. When the father was so ill, they came closer together than they ever had been since

Ali's boyhood. On his side, the Aga Khan appears to be getting over the disappointment he felt that his son has never lived up to the high hopes he held for the boy's future; but in his innermost heart His Highness now realises that primarily the fault is his and his alone. Now, at forty-two, the Ali Khan is a very charming playboy of the Western World.

When His Highness thinks of his second son, Sadruddin, he must feel, as he has every right to feel, a very proud father. The boy was brought up mostly by his French mother, but his father has always been very fond of him, although it was evident that he never competed with his half-brother for his father's affection.

Back on the Riviera in his villa at Le Cannet, surrounded by palm trees, mimosa and roses, which nothing but the most balmy of breezes ever disturbs, the Aga Khan must spend many hours thinking about the past and writing witty but caustic letters about the disturbing present. One may wonder whether he considers his position to be an anachronism in this atomic world and whether he asks himself if it really matters who succeeds him, but although a god to many of his followers, the Aga Khan is no doubt a god with human feelings. No man is likely to condemn himself as an out-dated personage and for that reason to be considered useless. The point is nevertheless of import to millions, because of the One Man Welfare State the Aga Khan developed. Without him—or his like—it would collapse. Whatever one's opinions are of the Aga Khan, one must concede that he is unique and if he had not existed it would have been quite impossible to invent him.

If the Aga Khan had been able to bring up his older son to follow closely in his footsteps, there might not have been any fear that there would be a great drop in receipts of monies, but, matters being as they are, it is only to be expected that the sum total of 'Ismail's Pence' will shrink visibly after the demise of the present Aga Khan. Doubtless, the more fanatical followers

will continue to make their prescribed payments, but how, one wonders, can payments be expected to be made to an Imam of whom they know so little.

As has been explained, the Aga Khan has all his life been on the side of Education; everywhere he went he preached it and has during the course of his life raised hundreds of thousands of pounds to spread it. There were cynics who said that Education would act as a boomerang against the Aga Khan, but how little did they know the conditions of the East.

Consider Bombay. In Bombay the Aga Khan spent a goodly part of his youth. His principal home in India is there; his mother and his first wife lived there. Writing of Bombay in January, 1951, a U.N.E.S.C.O. official wrote: 'The jungle of illiteracy, poverty and disease grow densely in urban back streets.' Eighteen per cent of the two-and-a-half million inhabitants of Bombay are totally illiterate. What is true of Bombay is true of the Orient; nowhere is it better than Bombay; in most places, such as Egypt, far worse. Never in the lifetime of the Aga Khan's sons will conditions be better.

Sitting in his garden contemplating the past and maybe trying to draw on experience to cope with the present and future, the Aga Khan must have certain melancholy regrets, and like many another student of foreign affairs, he will realise that one of the truest sayings concerns the inevitable repetitions of History. Twenty-seven years ago he played a leading part as Britain's Agent in unseating the traitorous and anti-British Khedive of Egypt. A new dynasty was created; at the Aga Khan's suggestion (British Premiers and Sovereigns then sought his advice) Fuad was put on the Throne of Egypt. Now, at the other end of the Mediterranean from where the Aga Khan sits, Fuad's son, Farouk, has achieved anti-British notoriety.

In Persia, the cradle of the Aga Khan's family, there has been a break with Britain. Across the Mediterranean, in North Africa,

the story of the upheaval in Islam is continued. The upsurge of Nationalism in the Moslem world has the sympathy of the Aga Khan. He has affirmed his opinion, as he had every right to do. But, we others, passing his life in review have an equal right to try to find how and when His Highness reached his conclusions.

In those far off days when Queen Victoria paid heed to him, His Highness worked heart and soul for Britain. True, when the question of Indian independence arose, the Aga Khan supported India's claim, but he always added that India should remain within the framework of the British Empire. We have seen, too, how hard His Highness worked for Britain during the 1914–18 War and again with regard to Turkey in 1922. There were from time to time troubles in Egypt, but never did one hear one word of comment unfavourable to Britain from the Aga Khan. If during those times he supported Moslem Nationalism, he was mute about it.

Unless one is mistaken, a change of heart began to be manifest around 1933. Obviously he believed that Britain was ungrateful, but he behaved with very great dignity. He could have been far more vocal but he registered his protests in the correct circles. Unfortunately for His Highness his protests and appeals were rejected. There may be people who believe that from that time the Aga Khan acted with less dignity and with less wisdom and shrewdness than he usually displayed. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the majority of the men in Britain and India with whom he had been not only familiar but on terms of the giving of well received advice had passed on. To the minds of some, including his biographer, the Aga Khan appeared like some mystic apparition stranded on a shore and regarding with surprised melancholy the receding tide.

Like many a lesser man, the Aga Khan has heard the rattling of skeletons in his family cupboard. Sometimes his detractors, the Khoja Reform Party, have sought to bring out those skeletons

INDEX

INDEX