

the service of his State and one whose rule was unstained by a single act of tyranny.

Sikandar
Begam (1st
period)
(1819-37).

He left one child, an infant daughter, Sikandar Begam. It was arranged with the consent of the Bhopāl nobles and the sanction of the British Government that Nazar Muhammad's nephew, Munīr Muhammad Khān, the son of his elder brother Amīr Muhammad Khān, should succeed under the regency of Gohur Begam, better known as Kudsia Begam, and should eventually marry Sikandar Begam, thus securing the rule in Wazīr's branch. To this arrangement neither Ghaus Muhammad nor any member of his immediate family raised any objections.

In 1827, however, Munīr Muhammad attempted to assert his authority, but was opposed by Kudsia Begam. Several encounters took place between the adherents of either party. Finally, Mr. Maddocks, the Political Agent, interfered and an arrangement was come to by which Munīr Muhammad consented to resign in favour of his younger brother Jahāngīr Muhammad Khān, receiving as compensation a *jāgīr* of Rs: 40,000 a year.

At this juncture the favourite minister of the late chief, Hākīm Shehād Masīh (Balthazar Bourbon), who was the chief director of affairs and whose advice had proved invaluable, died on 24th *Jamādi-ul-Akhīr* 1244 A.H. (1st January 1829).

Kudsia Begam was anxious to retain the power in her own hands as long as possible. With this view she on one pretext and another delayed the marriage of her daughter with the Nawāb. In 1833, however, the Nawāb visited Lord W. Bentinck at Saugor and while there preferred a request that he might be granted administrative powers. Although the Viceroy was not prepared to support this request he sent a message through the Political Agent urging Kudsia Begam to celebrate the wedding with her daughter. Kudsia Begam was annoyed at the pressure thus put upon her, but finally on 18th *Zilhijja* 1250 A.H. (17th April 1835) the wedding was solemnised. Kudsia Begam, however, continued to administer the State, which caused differences to arise between her and the Nawāb.

Dissensions also arose between the Nawāb and Sikandar Begam. Finally, in 1837, matters reached a crisis. On the occasion of the feast of Abdul Kādir Ghilānī held on 11th *Rabi-ul-Akhīr* 1252 A.H. (26th July 1836) information was received that a plot had been concocted by the Nawāb to seize the two Begams on their return from the feast. The Begams contrived to escape in safety to the palace, while a force was at once sent to confine the Nawāb within his own residence.