

way like the fastest European woman you may happen to know, for example, mixing politics with her personalities I happened to say somewhat emphatically that everything depended on the way a system was worked, on the 'Umāl' that everything in fact was 'Umāl' and wished you had seen how she turned to her two ministers (Jamiluddin Khan and Lala Kishen Ram) sitting dumb some way off, and cried 'Gentlemen, do you hear, That's for you, "umāl" is everything ' She shows a fine Elizabethan taste in the choice of her officers of state."¹

On 11th *Zikāt* 1271 A.H. (26th July 1855) the marriage of Shāh Jahān Begam was celebrated with Bakshī Bāki Muhammad Khān, the Commander-in-Chief of the State army. He was recognised as Nawāb-consort and was granted the title of Nawāb-Nazīr-ud-daula Umrao Dula Bahādur and a personal salute of 17 guns. Sikandar Begam was to continue Regent until her daughter was 21.

In A.H. 1273 (1857) came the Mutiny. Throughout this period no chief in the length and breadth of India proved more staunch an ally than Sikandar Begam.

As in 1778, so again at this crisis the Bhopāl State proved itself a true friend of the British Government. By the most strenuous exertions she kept the peace throughout her own territories, although the Maulvis in Bhopāl city were preaching the *jihād* and she was being personally threatened by her troops.² Colonel Durand, the Agent to the Governor General, retreating from Indore was given temporary asylum at Sehore and then escorted to Hoshangābād, and fugitives from all sides were given assistance and placed in safety. But Sikandar Begam's efforts did not stop here. She gave all the assistance in her power to British troops outside her dominions, sending supplies of grain and forage as far north as Kālpī, and detachments to keep the peace in Saugor and Bundelkhand. Fāzīl Muhammad Khān and Adīl Muhammad Khān, the *jaḡīrdārs* of Ambāpānī, who rebelled, were at once attacked and their estates confiscated, while the refractory *kilādār* of Rāhatgarh, who refused to admit the British, was seized and impaled. When the Bhopāl Contingent troops at Sehore mutinied she sent a force to overawe them and restore peace, also taking charge of the Government treasury.²

On the restoration of order Sikandar Begam urged her claims to be regarded not as Regent but as the ruling chief of Bhopāl, on the strength of her services during the Mutiny,

¹ *Memorials of Service in India from the correspondence of the late Major S. C. Macpherson* by W. Macpherson (1865).

² *Narrative of events regarding the Mutiny in India, 1857-58*. Vol. i. Letters 23A, 26A, July 16th, 1857.