

past indignities, and to promise him full support for the future. He was to be henceforth sole and supreme authority, till his young master, the Nizam should come of age, and then hopes were held out that as the final reward of all his services, he should have the satisfaction of seeing the Berar province restored to its lawful owner. Salar Jung came back to Hyderabad a happy man, and set himself to work with new vigor to deserve such high confidence. But the viceroy's honour was the last he was to receive at any man's hands. On the 8th February, 1883, and within a year of the Nizam's majority, the great minister suddenly died. Foul play, Blunt says, was suspected, as Salar Jung's unpopularity was real amongst evil doers.

The sequel can be best given in Mr. Blunt's own clear and vigorous language. "The residency for years past had given its countenance to the worst elements in Hyderabad political life, and Salar Jung's enemies must have known that his death would not be very gravely regretted in Calcutta." Salar Jung's death was seized upon by the Calcutta Foreign Office at once, for the most vigorous action yet taken against the Hyderabad State, under cover of the respectable name of an old Hindoo nobleman, the Peshkar, who had been Salar Jung's friend, but was now in his senility, the party of reaction was put in full power, and given a free hand to do what harm it pleased without let or hindrance from the resident, financially, politically, and in the business of administration. When I arrived at Hyderabad at the close of 1883, I found all government business at a stand-still, the employee's unpaid, Salar Jung's trained administrators being dismissed, and a general scramble going on at the expense of the treasury, both by Englishmen and natives.

Laik Ali, Salar Jung's eldest son, a young man of great promise and imbued with his father's ideas, had indeed been given a place by the government, but he was carefully excluded from any real power, and could only lament impotently the ruin of the State, and the triumph of his father's enemies."

"A truly infamous policy, worthy of the very worst traditions of the East India Company was being pursued towards the young Nizam." As long as the great minister was alive, no pains were spared to keep the Prince from those temptations which had been the ruin of his predecessors—the corruption of a life of pleasure and the sloth of the Zanana. Successful endeavors led the Prince to evil courses. Mr. Blunt spares details, but says, "it is a history as disgraceful as any in Indian annals. The one object of every official I conversed with on the subject was to put off the majority of the Nizam for another two years, to keep things as they were, and to prevent Lord Ripon from inquiring personally into matters. While at Hyderabad I did not refrain from speaking to the resident, Mr. Cordery himself, on the

subject, and afterwards with the Calcutta officials and their language to me was, that they regretted the state of things, but that they had no choice but to support the present arrangement, that the Nizam was too young to be released from tutelage, and that Laik Ali would do far better by making friends with the new regime, than by standing out against it. A "waiting game," I was assured, was his only policy. Yet, what did that waiting game mean, except the financial ruin of the State and the moral ruin of its master?

Fortunately Laik Ali did not wait. Plucking up courage, he appealed to Lord Ripon; and Lord Ripon, to the horror of the official world, resolved himself to go to Hyderabad, where, having won the young Nizam's confidence, he speedily learned the truth.

Prodigious were the efforts made to hoodwink the viceroy. Farcial and theatrical they now appear, inasmuch as that they have failed in effecting the object aimed at by the evil-doers. To the last moment all the world (of Hyderabad officialdom) believed that the Residency had triumphed. It seemed incredible that a single man, Governor-General though he was, should dare persist in an act of justice, condemned by every counsellor. Yet this is what Lord Ripon did, and events have fully justified him.

The last act of the drama was one of the most striking—I may say also the most touching—I ever witnessed. On the morning of the Nizam's installation which the viceroy insisted should be at once, it was not even yet known who was to be minister; and it was only when the poor Peshkar, the stalking horse of the intrigue, found his seat by the throne occupied and young Laik Ali there wearing a yellow turban the Nizam's color for the day, that it was understood that indeed right for once had triumphed over wrong and that the Hyderabad State was saved. It was a moment to remember as long as one lived, and I shall never forget the feelings with which I listened to the viceroy's speech—sermon I might have called it—to the young Prince whom he had just placed on the Musnad. It affected many besides myself, and even the official world for the moment bowed to the superior power of virtue.

Nor was this a transitory victory only. A few days later the Nizam publicly announced to the world his intention of adopting a different life from any his predecessors had lived. He left his Zimara in the city, and taking up his residence with a single wife in a smaller palace outside, set himself to acquire the arts of government in earnest; and as I see that his young minister is now Sir Salar Jung, and that the Nizam himself is about to receive the Szah of India from Lord Ripon's successor, we may feel some confidence that the intention has been kept.

Honesty in the Indian "political department," will, Mr. Blunt thinks, make Hindoostan everywhere genuinely loyal.