

CHITRAL MEMORIES

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SIEGE

LIEUT.-COLONEL B. E. M. GURDON

THIRTY-SEVEN years ago I was one of a small band of British officers who, in company with detachments of the 14th Sikhs and of the Ragonath regiment of Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry, were besieged in Chitral fort on the North-West Frontier of India. I am now the last survivor of that band of six.

I had been only three years in Political service, when, about the beginning of September 1892, I was appointed Assistant to Colonel Algernon Durand, the British Agent in Gilgit, and ordered to join that officer in Kashmir. I reported myself to Colonel Durand at Srinagar and accompanied him and Captain A. E. Sandbach, the newly appointed C.R.E. to the Agency, on their journey to Gilgit. The scenery on the Gilgit road is too well known to require any description from me and I will content myself by saying that I just revelled in its grandeur.

I spent the greater part of the next two years in Hunza-Nagir, where I relieved Captain F. E. (now Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis) Younghusband as Assistant British Agent in political charge of the district. It was a delightful life among, perhaps, the most manly, and generally attractive, people on the Kashmir frontier. It was also a good preparation for the duties I was before long to undertake in Chitral, as much of my work necessitated close intercourse with Humayun Beg, the Hunza Chief's very able Wazir, who, during the reign of Safdar Ali, the chief who fled when Colonel Durand's force captured Nilt in December 1891, lived for several years as an exile in Chitral. The Wazir was able to give me much useful information about the leading men in Chitral. I did not then know that I was destined to succeed Captain Younghusband in Chitral, but it was my duty to learn as much as I could about the Gilgit Agency and neighbouring districts, and I realized how fortunate I was to discover such a well-informed, reliable, and wise mentor. Humayun was certainly the strongest character on the Kashmir frontier. Another piece of good fortune was the skill of my clerk, Munshi Sher Mohamed, a *maulvi aalim* of the Lahore University, in coaching me in Arabic roots and Persian.

On the 30th August 1892, a few weeks before I arrived in Hunza, Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk, the *Lut* (great) *Mehtar*, as he was generally called, died, and I remember how forcibly Humayun Beg stressed

the importance of this event. He pointed out that the *Adamzadas*, or aristocracy, were discontented, as Aman-ul-Mulk had controlled them with a firm hand for many years, and he thought that only those who were connected by ties of foster-relationship with his numerous sons would oppose the claim of his exiled brother, Sher Afzal. The majority were weary of the exactions of the Lut Mehtar's sons, and disliked their apparent eagerness to rely on the support of British officers, which they feared would result in interference with local customs, and, especially, with the retention by the leading men of their slaves. Subsequent events certainly testified to the accuracy of the Wazir's forecast.

Another cause for mistrust of our intentions, mentioned to me by others, was the introduction of land-settlement operations in that portion of the Gilgit agency directly under the control of the Kashmir governor. There was, of course, no intention of introducing such operations to the self-governing parts of the Agency, but there is no doubt that the more discontented of the Adamzadas tried to persuade their compatriots that this would happen.

Chitral fort, on the right bank of the river of the same name, lies among the mountains about 150 miles north of Peshawar. The mighty Hindukush range forms the northern boundary of the State and divides it from Afghan Turkistan. On the west is the Bashgal valley of Kafirstan (now included in Afghanistan), and on the east the petty States of Hunza and Nagir, and Punial in the Gilgit Agency.¹ Another lofty range divides the State on the south from the independent tribal districts of Dir and Swat, Darel and Tangir. Both the capital, a collection of hamlets, and the State, are called Chitral; and the fort is almost equidistant from the Dorah pass on the north-west, connecting the Lut Kuh valley of Chitral with Zebak in Afghan Turkistan, and from the Lowari pass on the south, leading to Dir, Chakdara, and Malakand. The distance, as the crow flies, in both cases is about fifty miles.

The total area of Chitral (exclusive of Yasin) is about 4,500 square miles, the greatest length being about 200 miles from the Baroghil pass on the north to the Afghan frontier on the south. The population of the State is very sparse; in 1895 it probably did not exceed 55,000. By far the greater part of the country consists of mountains, among them being many snow-clad peaks, the best known of which is Tirich Mir (25,426 feet). Cultivation is mainly limited to small fan-shaped oases of alluvial soil deposited by mountain torrents just before their junction with the rivers. The limited

¹ I speak of the years immediately preceding the events here recorded. In 1895 the Yasin valley also formed part of Chitral territory. The Chitral river is known lower down as the Kunar.

amount of cultivable land is an important geographical point to remember when we attempt to trace the causes of the hostile attitude of the majority of the Adamzada class to British interference in Chitral politics in 1895.

It can be readily realized that in a country where cultivable land is limited in extent and in which there are no other means of livelihood there must always be a considerable number of discontented individuals. This, in my opinion, was the main reason for the support by the majority of the Adamzadas of the cause of the exiled Sher Afzal. Aman-ul-Mulk was such a strong ruler that no serious attempt to challenge his authority was made during his long reign. He naturally took steps to distribute the best houses and lands among his most trusted supporters and especially among the foster-relatives of himself and his two elder legitimate sons, Nizam-ul-Mulk and Afzal-ul-Mulk. When Aman-ul-Mulk died those who had failed to win his favour supported Sher Afzal's claim to the throne in the hope that they might profit by a redistribution of the lands held by their more fortunate compatriots. When they saw that the Government of India was apparently determined to support the claims of Aman-ul-Mulk's sons in opposition to his brother Sher Afzal, their discontent and hostility to our interference in the affairs of their country were very naturally aggravated. If the British garrison were even now to be withdrawn from Chitral this scarcity of cultivable land would, I think, lead inevitably to renewed disturbances.

From a military point of view it was a very difficult country in 1895. The main lines of communications were mere hill tracks, which, seldom easy, were often difficult and sometimes dangerous. For instance, the track between Chitral and Mastuj, a distance of sixty-three miles, following the river, passed in several places through narrow gorges bounded on one, sometimes on both banks of an unfordable and swiftly running river by almost perpendicular cliffs. Any detachment of troops using this route could, as Lieutenants Edwardes and Fowler, and Captain Ross and Lieutenant Jones found to their cost in the spring of 1895, be easily stopped by the removal of a few planks from the cliffs across which the track passed; and they would then prove an easy target to tribesmen hurling rocks from above and to riflemen hidden among the boulders on the opposite bank of the river. With the exception perhaps of the country between Hunza and the Pamirs it is probably the most difficult country on the whole of the Indian frontier.

Owing to their general illiteracy and the absence of any written records, it is difficult to form an opinion of the origin of the inhabitants of Chitral. It is, however, safe to say that they are made up of

many different races. It is also safe to say that the majority differ considerably in appearance, manners, and customs from both the *Siah Posh* Kafirs and the Pathans of Dir, Jandol, and Asmar, their neighbours on the west and south. It is probable that the middle and lower classes inhabiting the valley below Chitral are descended from the *Kalash* or slave Kafirs, the last remnant of the aboriginal race that has retained its original pagan faith. The inhabitants of the upper valleys, known as *Kho*, appear to be a mixed race, among them being families descended from the peoples both of Gilgit and Turkistan. The upper or ruling class, known as *Adamzadas*, are of a distinctly higher type and race than the mass of the people, and according to tradition the most important clans are descended from one Baba Ayub, who hailed from Khorasan and was related to the great emperor Taimur.

Various opinions as to the character of the Chitralis have been recorded. Colonel Lockhart (afterwards General Sir William Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief in India), head of the Chitral mission of 1885-6, wrote:

They are goodnatured and kindly among themselves and no soldier could wish for better partisans in hill warfare. . . . They seem to be impervious to cold or fatigue, and, after going 40 miles at high speed over the mountains, a man will be ready to dance or to sit down and sing by the camp fire throughout the night. Life is held of no account. They do not pretend to be even outwardly religious as a rule.

Sir George Robertson,¹ writing in 1895, was not so complimentary. He laid stress on their capacity for treachery and cold-blooded cruelty, their untruthfulness, and their power of keeping a collective secret. At the same time he admitted that they were charmingly picturesque and admirable companions. Finally, he thought that their most convenient trait, as far as we were concerned, was a complete absence of religious fanaticism.² My own view, expressed in 1903, was that, in view of their success in maintaining the integrity of their country in the past against invasion by Pathan and other tribesmen, there was a good fighting strain in the country. I also recorded that, though religion was not taken very seriously by the majority, nearly all would hesitate to perjure themselves after being

¹ Speaking generally I have described Sir George Robertson as Mr. Robertson in this narrative as he did not become a K.C.S.I. until after the siege of Chitral in April or May 1895. He held the rank of Surgeon-Major in the I.M.S., but had given up medical work after he entered the Political Department of the Government of India.

² Certainly in the upper valleys, where the people are Maulai Muhammadans (i.e. followers of H.H. the Aga Khan), they are very casual about religious observances. The Sunnis of lower Chitral are more particular.

sworn on the Koran. I also noted that all classes were very superstitious.

The importance of Chitral lay in its position at the extremity of the country over which the Government of India exerted its influence; and the policy of the Government since 1876 had been directed towards securing control of the external relations of the State in a direction friendly to our interests, an effective guardianship over its northern passes, and reliable news of events occurring beyond those passes.

In 1876 Aman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar of Chitral, had tendered his allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir, and a few months later represented with more urgency to the Maharaja his need for support, as the neighbouring Pathan Chiefs of Dir, Bajour, and Swat were, he said, submitting to the great Amir of Kabul, Abdur Rahman. In reply to this second letter the Maharaja was authorized to instruct the Chitral Chief to refuse compliance with the Amir's demands; and at the same time, under instructions from the Viceroy, a letter was addressed by our Commissioner at Peshawar to the Amir of Kabul warning him to relinquish his efforts to assume sovereignty over Chitral and the neighbouring chiefs, and reminding him that the British Government had never recognized his claims to allegiance from those chiefs. In pursuance of the agreement with the Maharaja of Kashmir, Major John Biddulph was deputed to Gilgit in 1877, and he visited the rulers of Yasin and Chitral and obtained from the latter a further written agreement acknowledging the suzerainty of Kashmir. The Amir, however, persisted in interfering, and this was one of the chief causes of the unrest on this section of the frontier in the latter part of the year 1894.

As I have mentioned, Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk died on the 30th August 1892. He was succeeded by his second son, Afzal-ul-Mulk, who happened at the time to be present in Chitral fort. The elder son, Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was in Yasin, fled to Gilgit. About this time the presence of Ghulam Haidar, the Afghan *Sipah Salar*, or Commander-in-Chief, in the Kunar valley, within a short distance of Chitral, was reported as having a very disturbing effect on the surrounding country and to have greatly increased the difficulties of our position.

On the 30th September 1892 Jemadar Rab Nawaz Khan, of the 15th Bengal Lancers, who had been our news-writer at Chitral since 1887, reported the seizure of Narsat fort by Umra Khan, the Khan of Jandol, and his refusal to vacate it when ordered to do so by both the Afghan *Sipah Salar* and Afzal-ul-Mulk. Nizam-ul-Mulk then made overtures to Umra Khan.

On the 6th November 1892, Aman-ul-Mulk's exiled brother,

Sher Afzal, who had for many years lived as a refugee in Badakshan and was in receipt of a handsome allowance from the Amir of Kabul, surprised the fort of Chitral and killed Afzal-ul-Mulk. This adventure had undoubtedly been approved by the Amir, who thus sought to obtain through this prince what the Government had disallowed, the suzerainty over Chitral.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was in Gilgit, then informed the British Agent that he proposed to move against Sher Afzal. On his departure Colonel Durand dispatched 2 Kashmir mountain battery guns, 250 rifles of a Kashmir regiment, and 100 Hunza levies armed with Snider carbines to Gupis, at the mouth of the Yasin valley.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, on crossing the Shandur pass, occupied Mastuj in the Yarkhun valley without opposition, and then moved on to Drasan. He was accompanied by a detachment of Hunza levies commanded by Humayun Beg, the Wazir whom I have mentioned above, and who was rightly respected for his sagacity and strength of character. A skirmish near Drasan, which, mainly owing to the skill of the Hunza Wazir, ended in favour of Nizam-ul-Mulk, gave rise to a rumour that Government troops¹ were included among Nizam-ul-Mulk's following; and this, coupled with the defection of a large number of leading men, was so discouraging to Sher Afzal that, after ruling for barely a month, he fled from Chitral and took refuge with the Afghan Sipah Salar at Asmar in the Kunar valley.

Shortly prior to Sher Afzal's flight, Umra Khan of Jandol, at the instigation of Ghulam Dastgir, a son of Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk by a slave girl, made an unsuccessful attack on Drosh, now the headquarters of our garrison in Chitral. Umra Khan was then warned by the Government of India that interference by him would not be approved.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had with difficulty been persuaded to occupy Chitral, now begged that a British officer might be sent to him, and in compliance with this request a mission under Surgeon-Major G. S. Robertson was dispatched to Chitral in January 1893. Writing from Chitral the following April, Mr. Robertson reported that Nizam-ul-Mulk's position was very insecure. He said that the new Mehtar was unpopular with the Adamzadas, who hoped that Sher Afzal would once more return; and it was evident that the leading men did not believe that the Amir would keep him under surveillance at Kabul in accordance with his promise to the Government of India. Another complication was the attitude of Umra Khan of Jandol, who not only still declined to evacuate the Narsat fort, but threatened to attack Drosh again, nominally in the in-

¹ The Hunza levies had been taught by British officers to fire volleys, and the Chitralis had had no previous experience of this method of fire control.

terests of Aman-ul-Mulk's younger son, Amir-ul-Mulk,¹ to whose sister he was married, but in reality with a view to seizing that part of the Chitral valley for himself.

In September 1893 the Secretary of State sanctioned the retention of a Political Officer in Chitral; and in accordance with Colonel Durand's proposals Captain F. E. Younghusband was directed to take up his residence at Mastuj fort near the junction of the Yarkhun and Laspur rivers, sixty-three miles above Chitral. An escort of a hundred rifles of the 15th Sikhs was left with Captain Young-husband.²

Later the same month the Government of India informed the Secretary of State that the Amir had undertaken to detain Sher Afzal in the Ghazni district.³ This promise on the part of the Amir was communicated to Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was also informed that the Khan of Jandol had been warned not to commit aggressions against Chitral, and that Muhammad Wali, the son of the late Mehtar Mir Wali, the murderer of Hayward, would not be allowed to disturb his authority in Yasin.⁴ At the same time it may be noted that the Government of India ignored the Chitrali claim to Narsat. Umra Khan was still in possession of Narsat fort, and the Government decided that it was inconvenient at that time to discuss his

¹ Amir-ul-Mulk was own brother to Shuja-ul-Mulk, the present Mehtar of Chitral.

² In 1894 this detachment was relieved by a detachment of the 14th Sikhs of similar strength.

³ In his dispatch to the Government of India, dated 1st September 1893, Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for India, wrote: 'In regard to Chitral, it has been the consistent policy of the Government of India to exclude from that country not merely the control, but even the influence, so far as possible, of the Amir of Afghanistan . . . I cannot agree that it would be a wise policy to give to the Amir suzerainty over Chitral, and it would be unjustifiable to deprive Kashmir of her acknowledged right of suzerainty in order to hand it over to the Amir of Afghanistan.'

Paragraph 3 of the agreement between the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan of Afghanistan and Sir H. M. Durand, representing the Government of India, which was signed at Kabul on the 12th November 1893, may also be noted. It runs as follows: 'The British Government thus agrees to H.H. the Amir retaining Asmar and the valley above it as far as Chanak. H.H. agrees on the other hand that he will at no time exercise interference in Swat, Bajour or Chitral, including the Arnawai or Bashgal valley.'

⁴ Lieutenant Hayward was probably the first Englishman to visit Yasin. He was murdered near the Darkot pass in 1870 by Mir Wali, the then ruler. Mir Wali paid for this crime with his life, he being killed by a servant of Pahlwan Bahadur. Sir George Robertson, writing in 1895, said: 'Mir Wali, the Mehtar of Yasin, who suffered for the crime, was probably instigated to it, not as he falsely declared, because Hayward had tried to force villagers to do his transport work, but because Aman-ul-Mulk of Chitral and perhaps the Kashmir authorities also dreaded the idea of English travellers visiting this borderland. Hayward's rifle was given to the Chitral Mehtar and many years afterwards was presented to me by Nizam-ul-Mulk.' I have heard on good authority that Hayward was not very diplomatic in his dealings with the villagers, but, of course, he was not in any position to use force.

attitude with reference to that fort.¹ It is important here to note that possession of the Narsat district almost certainly entailed submission by the Kafirs of the Bashgal valley to the Chief holding that district. These Kafirs depended for their livelihood almost entirely on their flocks; and in winter, when the Bashgal valley was under snow, they were in the habit of leaving the highlands and resorting with their flocks to the banks of the Chitral river.

In May 1894 Amir-ul-Mulk returned to Chitral, professing to have escaped from the hands of his brother-in-law Umra Khan, and was kindly received by Nizam-ul-Mulk.

I may now return to the narrative of my personal experiences.

Early in December 1894 I was ordered by Mr. Robertson, who had succeeded Colonel Durand as British Agent at Gilgit, to proceed to Chitral to take over the post of Political Officer in succession to Captain Younghusband, who had proceeded on leave. At this time Mr. Udny, the British Commissioner for the demarcation of the Afghan frontier, was encamped with Ghulam Haidar, the Afghan Sipah Salar at Nashagam, about fifty miles below Chitral and close to the junction of the Bashgal river with the Kunar.

Before I left Gilgit Mr. Udny had telegraphed to Mr. Robertson asking that a Political Officer might be sent to meet him in the Kunar valley. Mr. Robertson had rightly objected to this proposal unless a written permit and safeguard were first obtained for the journey through that part of the valley occupied by Umra Khan. Subsequently, the Government of India had also telegraphed that it was desirable for a British Officer to be sent to meet Mr. Udny. Finally, it was decided that I should remain for a time at Chitral, after presenting my credentials to the Mehtar, and keep in correspondence with Mr. Udny with regard to the claim of the Chitral Chief to the disputed territory.²

At Gupis, which is situated at the mouth of the Yasin valley, where the river of that name joins the Ghizr river, and about sixty miles north-west of Gilgit, I received from Mr. Robertson my final instructions. Mr. Robertson had visited Chitral during Mehtar Amanul-Mulk's reign when he made his daring journey into Kafirstan, and he had paid a second visit in January 1893, in response to Mehtar Nizam-ul-Mulk's anxiety to receive a British Officer; he was therefore well qualified to instruct me. It was evident that he thought my mission would not be unattended by risk, and the gravity of the political situation was brought home to me when he said that, in

¹ This district, called Nari by the Pathans, is a strip of country on the right bank of the Chitral or Kunar river between the junction with that river of the Bashgal river and Bailam (also called Bargam) some five miles above Asmar.

² See *Himalayan Journal*, vol. ii, p. 126.

the event of disturbances in the Kunar valley, I must at once summon my escort from Mastuj and dispatch urgent messengers with news of events to Gilgit.

Beyond Gupis I found the daily marches intensely interesting. The Ghizr valley was under snow, and I had frequently to dismount and lead my pony over places where frozen rivulets had rendered the track along the steeper slopes more difficult than in summer. The cold was considerable, and I was very thankful to find shelter for myself and my Indian servants in the villages. A representative of Mehtar Nizam-ul-Mulk had met me at Gupis, and by his order one of the best houses in each village at which I halted was cleared for my occupation.

On the third day after leaving Gupis I crossed the Shandur pass (12,400 feet), and I can remember to this day how bitterly cold was the wind. On the Chitral side of the pass I was met by Mohamed Rafi, the *Hakim* or Governor of the Laspur district; he struck me as not being too friendly, and I was not surprised to learn later from our news-writer in Chitral that he was not likely to be a trustworthy supporter of Nizam-ul-Mulk, as he was the foster-father of Mohamed Wali, son of the late Mir Wali, Hayward's murderer.¹ Mohamed Rafi was indeed himself present at the murder and doubtless felt none too comfortable when meeting British officers.

The estimate I then formed of Mohamed Rafi's attitude was fully borne out in the subsequent disturbances in which he took a prominent part against us. He had much influence with the Laspuris and a few weeks later Mr. Robertson offered to confirm him in the position of Hakim of Laspur with an allowance from the Kashmir State. Notwithstanding this he could not resist the temptation of joining Sher Afzal, and he persuaded his foster-son, Mohamed Wali, to do likewise. The foster-tie is very strong in the Hindukush region, and Mohamed Rafi hoped that his foster-son might become ruler of Yasin, Ghizr, and Laspur, and possibly of Mastuj also; he himself, in accordance with custom, would then become, next to the ruler, the most important person in that part of the country.

I have referred at some length to Mohamed Rafi to give some idea of the many conflicting interests with which we had to deal. It will readily be realized that it was very important for me to learn all I could of the character and political inclinations of the leading men of the villages through which I passed on my journey towards the capital.

At Mastuj fort, at the junction of the Yarkhun and Laspur rivers, which I reached on the fourth day after leaving Gupis, I found Lieutenant H. K. Harley and a company of the 14th Sikhs. Mastuj

¹ See note 4, p. 7.

is well described in Robertson's *Chitral, a Story of a Minor Siege*, as 'a dismal fort standing bleakly among saltpetre swamps'. Since Captain Younghusband had proceeded on leave a few months earlier in the year, Harley had been the sole British officer in this sad spot, and he gave me a very warm welcome. He introduced his two smart Sikh officers, Subadar Gurmukh Singh and Jemadar Atar Singh; and I was especially interested to meet the former as he knew the country well, having travelled all over it in 1885 as Havildar of the escort accompanying Colonel Lockhart's mission. This previous knowledge of the country was, as will be shown later, to prove particularly useful. I told Harley all I had learned from Mr. Robertson about the situation in lower Chitral and the precarious position of Mr. Udny's mission in the Kunar valley. I also informed him that I was authorized to summon a considerable number of his men to Chitral should I deem such a reinforcement to be necessary. I also had a talk with Subadar Gurmukh Singh and was interested to notice that he fully appreciated the difficulties, from a military point of view, of the track between Mastuj and Chitral. Harley was inclined to laugh at the possibility of attack by the ill-armed and, as he considered them to be, effeminate Chitralis. The local tribesmen, certainly, were no match for our Sikh infantry in open country, but it was foolish to put down as effeminate men who were admirable mountaineers, able to move about their native mountains with far greater celerity, and with much less effort, than our heavily laden sepoy, encumbered as they would also be by a train of laden coolies.¹ The disaster to Captain Ross's detachment in the Koragh defile a few weeks later furnished ample proof of the folly of underrating the fighting qualities of the Chitrali in such difficult country. There is an admirable picture of the Koragh defile facing page 115 of Robertson's *Chitral*.

On leaving Mastuj I took with me Naik Narain Singh and seven picked sepoy of the 14th Sikhs. They were splendid men and I felt that it was a great privilege to have them with me. I shall have occasion to refer later in this narrative to the devoted service they rendered me.

My march beyond Mastuj was uneventful until I arrived at the village of Mori on the right bank of the Chitral or Mastuj river. Here I was met by our news-writer, Jemadar Rab Nawaz Khan, and his father-in-law, Aksakal Fateh Ali Shah, the Mehtar's principal revenue collector, a fine-looking man of about fifty, whose appearance was, however, rather spoilt by a very prominent goitre. From them I again learnt that Nizam-ul-Mulk's position as Mehtar was far from secure, and that there was a strong anti-English party

¹ The track at that time was not fit for mule transport.

which longed for the return of Sher Afzal. Rab Nawaz Khan also informed me that he thought the Afghan Commander-in-Chief, who was with Mr. Udny's Boundary Commission, had been spreading rumours that the Indian Government intended eventually to annex all the country up to the boundary fixed by the Commission. My arrival in Chitral would, he thought, serve to strengthen the suspicions of the tribesmen of Dir and Jandol who, owing to the teaching of the Baba Sahib of Dir and other bigoted Mullas, had never been friendly towards us. Rab Nawaz Khan was also confident that Sher Afzal continued to intrigue in Chitral and that his supporters attached little importance to the Amir's promise to keep him under restraint; nor were the Afghans likely to abandon lightly their claim to the Narsat district and the Bashgal valley of Kafiristan; and the rumour that the object of my visit was to present a counter-claim by Chitral was hardly calculated to render me more popular with the Afghan Commissioner in Mr. Udny's camp. Another discordant element in the situation, he pointed out, was Umra Khan of Jandol, who was determined to keep Narsat if he could and was not likely to be friendly to a British officer coming from the direction of Chitral without sufficient authority to support his claims.

Before retiring to rest that night I wrote to Mr. Robertson to tell him all I had heard.

On the 17th December 1894 I arrived at Chitral. About seven miles from Chitral the river passes through a narrow gorge and the track at that time crossed the face of a precipitous rock cliff, known as the *Biteri pari*, close to the water's edge, by a gallery, made of rough wooden poles fastened with wire to iron staples driven into the rock and covered with flat stones, earth, and brushwood.¹ The gallery looked very insecure and I was relieved to see that the Chitrali horsemen, who were showing me the way, dismounted. I was not surprised to hear later that not a few ponies had fallen into the river at this spot. I usually rode Badakshan ponies during my tour of service in Gilgit and Chitral and found them hardy and excellent hacks and very clever on difficult ground. Horse-breeding is very popular in Badakshan. I only had one pony killed on a rock cliff, and that accident would not have happened if the man leading the pony had given him his head. I also lost one pony off a rickety cantilever bridge near the Baroghil pass from similar want of judgement on the part of my orderly.

About a mile beyond this gallery where the river leaves the gorge

¹ The description given by Lieut. Fowler, R.E., of this in his diary, written in 1895, was as follows: 'A precipitous rock face. Through this precipice the road had been carried in a marvellous manner, built out on timbers stuck in crevices in the rocks and carried on walls resting on small projections in the almost vertical cliffs.'

I changed into uniform; and a mile or so farther on, where the track emerges into the plain, Nizam-ul-Mulk, accompanied by a great cavalcade of the leading men in the country, met me. The mob which accompanied the Mehtar was wonderfully picturesque. All the men were armed in some way and many carried fire-arms, the more trusted bearing Snider rifles or carbines, and others muzzle-loading Enfield rifles or matchlocks.

The Mehtar's falconers and his *corps de ballet*, comprising both men and boys in bright-coloured raiment, were also present.¹ All the leading men were mounted on useful-looking ponies and several had permitted a retainer to mount behind their saddles. Many of the ponies were decked with silver-mounted trappings which, together with the brilliant-coloured garments of silk, broadcloth, and cloth of gold, worn by their riders, lent brightness to a fascinating spectacle.

From the place of meeting we rode at a walk, a distance of about two miles, to the cantilever bridge spanning the river, to cross which we dismounted. The Mehtar and those who rode closest to him were evidently genuinely pleased at my arrival, and gave me a cordial welcome. I was glad to find that Nizam-ul-Mulk seemed to experience no difficulty in understanding my Persian. He himself talked with animation and all went smoothly until we were opposite the fort a short distance beyond the bridge. Here our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a stupid-looking youth of from eighteen to twenty years of age. He was clad in plain and not over-clean white garments and white turban badly tied and looked more like a *talib-ul-lim* (student for the priesthood) than anything else. He salaamed profoundly, but the Mehtar made no attempt to introduce him or acknowledge his salutation; and when he dropped behind to find a place in the cavalcade, and I inquired as to his identity, the Mehtar replied that he was only one of his many brothers. I found afterwards that this description was distinctly misleading. I knew that Aman-ul-Mulk had left many sons. Indeed, according to Colonel Durand, 'he had eighty children and at every village you might find a small son or hear of a daughter'. The im-

¹ The Chitrali falconers are famous on this part of the frontier. It is an hereditary occupation and the most prized bird is the Goshawk which will always fetch a good price in Peshawar. The right of catching hawks is much sought after and the spurs descending from the watershed to the right bank of the river below Chitral are generally allotted to the Mehtar's favourites. Small huts about the size of a large writing-table with a trap door in the roof are built into the hill-side, and the falconer takes up his position in these with a partridge as bait. The partridge is placed on the roof with a string fastened to its legs and when the hawk seizes it the quarry with the hawk still attached is gently drawn through the trap door. It is customary for several huts to be erected on each spur or ridge at a distance from one another of a few hundred yards, and the falconer sits high or low on the hill according as the sky is clear or overcast.

important point was that this young man was Amir-ul-Mulk, a legitimate son of Aman-ul-Mulk by a *Khunza*, or Queen; it is only the sons of Khunzas who are recognized by the Adamzadas as possible heirs to the *masnad*.¹ Thus it will be seen that the plain young man was of more importance than Nizam-ul-Mulk wished me to believe. In view of what occurred a few days later I have thought this incident worthy of record; and I may at once mention that I took an early opportunity of expostulating with Nizam-ul-Mulk on the folly of treating his brother and heir presumptive in so off-hand a manner.

Nizam-ul-Mulk escorted me as far as the Chitrali house occupied by Mr. Robertson's mission in 1893 and subsequently by Captain Founghusband. It was a house of two stories, the part meant for occupation by the owner being above, while the ground floor was utilized for storing grain and firewood and for servants' quarters and tables. The front entrance to the owner's living-rooms was by a door at the head of a flight of steps leading from a garden, itself enclosed by rough stone walls and containing *chenar* (plane) and pricot trees and a *chabutra* (platform) of stones and mud, so placed as to ensure to the user the maximum amount of shade. Entry to the ground-floor rooms on the east side was by a fairly spacious courtyard having stables at the end farthest from the house and sheds on either side. On the south side, at a distance of less than 100 yards, was a *masjid*, and between it and the house was the enclosed burial ground of the ruling family.² Behind the garden or orchard on the west were fields rising gradually to the steep spur on the right bank of the ravine known as the Chitral Gol. From this spur the flat roof of the house could be commanded by marksmen armed with Martini-Henry rifles. On the north side of the house was the deeply cut bed of the Chitral Gol.

During the week following my arrival I had daily talks with Nizam-ul-Mulk and found him an interesting companion. He was as fair as any southern European, distinctly good-looking with very pleasing manners. A good deal of our conversation related to the claim of Chitral to the district of Narsat, and I promised, as indeed I was bound to do by the instructions I had received from Mr. Robertson, to submit a report to Mr. Udny on the claims of the Chitral ruler to the disputed district.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was, according to Chitrali ideas, a keen sportsman,

¹ Nizam-ul-Mulk had no sons. Aman-ul-Mulk left four legitimate sons by *Khunzas*: Nizam-ul-Mulk and Afzal-ul-Mulk by a daughter of Ghazan Khan, Khan of Dir; and Amir-ul-Mulk and Shuja-ul-Mulk by a daughter of Abdullah Khan, Khan of Asmar. Shuja-ul-Mulk, the present Mehtar, was then a boy of about twelve years of age.

² I was informed that all buried here with the exception of the late Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk had died violent deaths.

and when he heard I was anxious to shoot a markhor he begged me to allow him to arrange a drive for markhor in the ravine adjoining the house I occupied. The Chitralis are great experts at such drives, and I had heard a good deal about the large bags usually secured. I was not, however, anxious to take part in a *battue* of this kind; and I made the excuse that I was in want of exercise and would prefer to enjoy the excitement of finding a big head and stalking it. The Mehtar agreed to give effect to my wishes by detailing his half-brother, Mehtarjau Asfandiar, and his favourite foster-brother, Bul Khan, to accompany me; and it was arranged that I should start on the 1st January 1895 on a trip which was intended to last two or three days. The Chitral Gol which was to be the scene of my expedition was the Mehtar's special preserve, and it was arranged that I should start after an early lunch and ride or walk by a steep zigzag path up a spur on the left bank of the ravine and then descend to a hut at the junction of two nullahs in the bed of the ravine and there spend the night. My baggage was to be sent on ahead at an earlier hour.

I sent off my final report relating to the Chitrali claim to the Narsat district to Mr. Udny, said farewell to Nizam-ul-Mulk, and started on what I hoped would prove a very pleasant expedition. I arrived at the hut shortly before sundown. I found my Kashmiri cook had tea ready and also that a runner had arrived with a mail bag which contained letters from Gilgit and England. I had hardly finished reading these letters when Asfandiar and Bul Khan rushed in to say that Wazir Wafadar Khan had arrived with the news that the Mehtar had been murdered.

The crisis, which ever since my arrival in Chitral a few days earlier I had felt to be threatening, had arrived with startling rapidity. I at once interviewed Wafadar Khan, who, though too agitated to give a coherent account of what had happened, made it clear that the murder was the work of the unfortunate ruler's despised half-brother, Amir-ul-Mulk.

Evidently the first thing to do was to get back to Chitral as speedily as possible, and I decided to follow the ravine to about 300 or 400 yards above the house assigned to me for residence. It was not a pleasant journey, as it entailed a good deal of wading by torchlight through icy cold water in order to avoid patches of smooth rock covered with ice. Lieut.-Colonel R. L. Kennion gives a graphic description of this ravine on page 110 of his book, *Sport and Life in the Himalaya*. With his permission I quote here his account of his own experiences in the same ravine:

Early one winter morning I found myself following a Chitrali guide up a gorge where sheer sides of rock in places almost met above us. Every few

hundred yards the torrent impinged against one rock wall or the other necessitating a crossing by means of a pine pole flung across the foaming water. The night's frost had glazed such of these as were touched by the spray with a film of ice which had to be dusted with sand before even my light-footed guide could trust himself on them. But for these, and occasional anxious moments at points where a crossing of the stream had been deemed unnecessary in local opinion, and we had to creep gingerly round difficult rock corners where the water below roared a most uninviting summons—the track was monotonous enough, as one could see but a short way in front owing to the turns of the gorge.

The alternative to the route down the gorge was a tedious climb to the spur by way of which I had arrived earlier in the day. I was wearing grass shoes, the sandals made of rice grass worn by sportsmen in Kashmir, the best kind of foot-gear for rapid movement under such conditions. I do not remember that I made much use of the pine poles mentioned by Colonel Kennion. I had gone a considerable distance when I saw approaching me, from the direction of Chitral, an excited crowd, among whom I was relieved to recognize Jemadar Rab Nawaz Khan. The latter very soon acquainted me with details of the tragedy. Nizam-ul-Mulk had been hawking that morning in the vicinity of Broz, a pleasant village of scattered houses standing in orchards on the left bank of the river about ten miles below Chitral. At a moment when most of the falconers and his most trusted adherents had left him to retrieve the hawks, his *safar* (turban) came unfastened. Remaining mounted Nizam-ul-Mulk bent his head to enable a servant to rearrange his head-dress. It was an ideal opportunity for an enemy. Amir-ul-Mulk, believed by many to be half-witted, was riding close at hand. Seeing that his half-brother was unable to move his head Amir-ul-Mulk signed to his servant, a Kalash Kafir, who had a loaded Snider carbine hidden for use on just such an occasion under his *choga*, the long robe of homespun universally worn throughout the country. The scoundrel immediately shot Nizam-ul-Mulk in the back with fatal effect; and Amir-ul-Mulk, acknowledging that the shot had been fired by his order, galloped off to secure possession of the arms and treasure in the fort at Chitral. I learned later that his enemies had determined to kill Nizam-ul-Mulk that day in the house of a noble named Shahzada Khan of Broz, a warm adherent of Sher Afzal, whose invitation to the midday repast the unfortunate Mehtar had accepted. With Rab Nawaz Khan were Ataliq Nara Jang, the late Mehtar Afzal-ul-Mulk's foster-father, and Mohamed Rafi, the Hakim of Laspur, whom I have already mentioned, and the majority of Nizam-ul-Mulk's most trusted officials. The two first named immediately declared that all the people looked to me

as the representative of Government to show them what to do. They added that Amir-ul-Mulk had entered the fort and proclaimed himself Mehtar and they wished to know whether I would recognize him as such. I at once replied that I had no authority to recognize any one as Mehtar and I could do nothing until I received the orders of my Government. I advised them, however, to accompany me to my quarters where we could talk matters over. The whole crowd came on with me. As was to be expected, the supporters of the murdered Chief appeared to be in a state of great trepidation as to their own fate. They had good cause to fear that their lives were in jeopardy and that their lands would be confiscated for the benefit of the supporters of the new ruler; and, judging from their obvious anxiety not to lose sight of me, they seemed to think I might be able to protect them. Some of these men had visited India with Afzal-ul-Mulk or Nizam-ul-Mulk and realized the extent of our power.

As may be imagined I had much to think of while hurrying along, and I wondered what I should find on arrival at the house. I felt particularly anxious for the safety of the eight Sikhs forming my escort. I felt that they were in greater danger than the rest of my staff owing to the fact that they were not Muhammadans. I kept on turning over in my mind what attitude I should adopt towards Amir-ul-Mulk. Although I realized that in the eyes of the Chitralis it was merely a case of history repeating itself I found it difficult to avoid showing the loathing I felt for the conspirators responsible for the murder of the Chief who had given me such a courteous welcome. I also felt indignant at what seemed to me then the impudence of all concerned in the crime in committing it during my visit to Chitral. However I realized that the lives of a good many people depended on my facing the situation as calmly as I could and in my showing the conspirators that I was confident of the power of the Government of India to deal promptly and effectively with any troubles which might arise consequent on the change of ruler.

During the walk down the ravine Rab Nawaz Khan managed to whisper to me that he had already dispatched a messenger with news of the murder to Harley at Mastuj. He hoped the man would get through before the roads were closed by Amir-ul-Mulk. I learnt afterwards that this messenger did not get farther than the village of Reshun, about half-way to Mastuj, before being arrested and brought back to Chitral. At the time, however, I remember that I was comforted to know that the Jemadar had acted so promptly.

On arrival at the house I was relieved to see my eight Sikhs standing at the foot of the steps which gave access to the room which served as a hall and through which it was necessary to pass in order to enter a room on the left which I used as sitting-room and office.

A crowd of people, most of whom were supporters of the late ruler, were also gathered near the steps, and I could see that there were more people collected near the adjoining masjid to which I was told Nizam-ul-Mulk's body had already been brought. It was very cold, so I ordered Naik Narain Singh to arrange for a fire in the hall and for the men's bedding to be brought up there, and also directed him to place a sentry at the door of the sitting-room with orders to let no one enter without permission from myself or Rab Nawaz Khan. I took Rab Nawaz Khan and his father-in-law, Fateh Ali Shah, and the more important of the others, who had met me in the ravine, into the sitting-room, and gave instructions that any of the late Mehtar's supporters, who wished to come in, should be permitted to sit in the hall, or, if there were not sufficient room there, in the upper courtyard behind, which led to the sleeping apartments.¹ Then, after changing into dry garments—I was feeling uncomfortably cold by this time—I sent a message to the fort that I expected to be supplied with three messengers, to take my letters containing a report of what had occurred to Mr. Udny at Nashagam, to Mr. Robertson at Gilgit, and to Lieutenant Harley at Mastuj. I realized that Amir-ul-Mulk and his supporters might refuse to forward my letters, but I thought I had better test their attitude in this connexion at once. I was writing these letters when I was informed that a deputation from Amir-ul-Mulk wished to see me. Now, I thought, I shall get some idea of Amir-ul-Mulk's attitude. The deputation was admitted and the members were introduced by Rab Nawaz Khan. When I inquired of the deputation whether the messengers I had asked for were present they replied that before answering that question it was their duty to tell me that Amir-ul-Mulk had sent them to say he realized he had acted disrespectfully towards the Government of India in killing his brother, but he hoped I would take into consideration the fact that he had been obliged to kill him in self-defence and that I would remember that he was the eldest survivor of the legitimate sons of the Lut Mehtar and that as such I would recognize him as Mehtar.

I again replied in the presence of all the men collected in my room that I had no authority to recognize any one as Mehtar and that all I could do was to submit a report to the British Agent in Gilgit. Meanwhile I said I had no desire to interfere in the internal administration of Chitral. I made this latter remark in order to explain that, though I had permitted some of the late Mehtar's supporters to take refuge in my quarters, I had no intention of identifying myself with any particular party in the State. I continued

¹ i.e. the rooms which, if a Moslem had been in occupation of the house, would have been reserved for the women.

that my only concern was to carry out the orders given me by the British Agent at Gilgit. One of these orders was to summon the rest of my escort to join me from Mastuj. I had accordingly written to Lieutenant Harley, ordering him to send off a detachment of fifty men at once. I said I expected the headmen of villages to assist this detachment to obtain transport and shelter by night, and I asked that Aqsakal Fateh Ali Shah should be authorized to instruct the headmen of districts to send in supplies, which I could purchase for consumption by my escort, and for which I was prepared to pay liberally. I added that the British Agent had stressed the importance of sending news quickly to Gilgit and I consequently expected my letters to be forwarded with all possible celerity. In conclusion, after expatiating on the infinite power of the *Sarkar* and advising them for the good of their country to comply promptly with my requests, I referred again to Amir-ul-Mulk's desire to be recognized as Mehtar and pointed out that, by helping me whole-heartedly in the manner indicated, he had an excellent opportunity of proving the sincerity of his protestations of friendship towards the Government of India.

After the deputation had left I had duplicates made of my letters. These I entrusted to Rab Nawaz Khan, who I thought would be able, with the aid of his father-in-law, Fateh Ali Shah, to find trustworthy messengers capable of eluding the guards which Amir-ul-Mulk might have placed on the roads. I had just finished doing this when one of Amir-ul-Mulk's advisers came to inform me that the Mehtar wished to see Jemadar Rab Nawaz Khan and that he refused to send on my letters until he had seen him. I replied that I declined to send the Jemadar to the fort at that hour of the night, and directed the messenger to inform Amir-ul-Mulk in open Durbar that I regretted that he had delayed my letters, as I was bound to suspect that by his action he did not intend to keep the promises of allegiance to the Government which he had made earlier in the evening.

It was now very late, and after placing a second sentry at the top of the steps I prepared to retire to rest in the bedroom on the side of the house nearest to the burial-ground and the masjid. I had not finished undressing when a further deputation arrived from the fort to inform me that my letters had been dispatched, as it had been decided that it was useless to attempt to stop my letters from reaching their destination.

I did not sleep very soundly that night as I kept asking myself again and again whether I had done rightly in directing Harley to send me fifty more Sikhs. Mr. Robertson had certainly ordered me to send for the rest of my escort, but was he right in giving such an

order? I had seen how terribly difficult the country was, through which the detachment would have to pass, and I realized how easy it would be for mountaineers like the Chitralis to surround the Sikhs in one of the defiles after blocking the track in front and behind. However, though I was pretty certain that Sher Afzal's supporters wished to put an end to our interference in Chitral, I did not think it likely they would commit themselves by an overt act of hostility until Sher Afzal himself actually arrived on the scene. Provided the commander of the detachment was reasonably diplomatic I hoped all would be well. At the same time I remembered that my reinforcement had to march sixty-three miles, that the men would probably be heavily laden, and that consequently some days must elapse before my anxiety as to their safety could be set at rest. I listened to the sounds of mourning issuing from the adjacent masjid, to which poor Nizam-ul-Mulk's body had been brought, wondering how long it would be before Harley and Mr. Robertson would receive reliable news of what had happened in the event of my letters being stopped.

Early next morning Rab Nawaz Khan volunteered to go to the fort to reassure Amir-ul-Mulk's adherents by telling them I really meant to abstain from interfering in the administration of the country until I received orders from the Government. He was confident that the party in favour of the Government was so strong and that the others were so afraid of us that it was most improbable he would be harmed. With some reluctance I agreed to the Jemadar's proposal. He returned from the fort about 11 a.m. and told me Amir-ul-Mulk wished to come and pay his respects to me. I assented at once as I thought it important to see Amir-ul-Mulk as soon and as often as possible, and I hoped that I might thus be able to reassure the people about the coming of the Sikhs and to strengthen my own position.

Rab Nawaz Khan also brought news that Nayab, the headman of the important village of Shoghor in the Lut Kuh valley, on the road to the Dorah pass and Badakhshan, together with his two sons, had been killed by Amir-ul-Mulk's order. Apparently the first thing Amir-ul-Mulk thought of after killing Nizam-ul-Mulk, was to satisfy his lust for revenge against those who had aroused his enmity during the reigns of his father and brothers. There were two men against whom he nourished a special feeling of hatred, the headman of Shoghor and his own half-brother Ghulam Dastgir, who lived at the village of Kesu, about twenty miles below Chitral. The latter had taken an active part in the political assassinations which had been so numerous since death had put an end to the firm rule of his old father, Aman-ul-Mulk, and he was not exactly a popular person. He was shrewd enough to recognize this fact and energetic enough to

take suitable precautions to ensure timely warning of the need for flight. I learnt afterwards that he had posted a sentinel on a hillock overlooking the road in the direction of Chitral with instructions to fire an agreed number of shots in the event of danger. On the day of Nizam-ul-Mulk's murder Ghulam Dastgir was at home, and, on hearing the signal shots, immediately mounted his pony, which was always kept ready saddled, and together with his little son and a few trustworthy servants rode off down the valley with the utmost speed, and made no halt until he reached the camp of Mr. Udny at Nashagam some thirty miles distant. He would certainly have been killed by Amir-ul-Mulk's myrmidons had he acted less promptly. Nayab, the headman of Shoghor, was less fortunate. The executioners arrived before the news of Nizam-ul-Mulk's murder, and Nayab and his two sons were immediately cut down with swords, in the usual Chitrali fashion, the sons being killed first, one by one, in front of their despairing father, an added torture expressly ordered, I understand, by Amir-ul-Mulk. I was horrified at the merciless manner in which the savage young Chief had taken his revenge, and determined to do what I could to prevent the perpetration of similar horrors. Such executions had doubtless been only too common in Chitral in recent years; but I could not help picturing to myself the despair of their women-folk when the wretched victims were dragged out to be killed, probably within ear-shot; and it was brought home to me what heart-breaking anxiety must have been the portion of the wives of many leading men at each change of ruler.

It was now arranged that, as the weather was fine and Amir-ul-Mulk would be accompanied by a numerous retinue, the meeting should take place at 2 p.m. on the *chabutra* in the garden adjoining my house. Before the Mehtar's messenger left I took the opportunity of impressing on him the necessity, in his master's own interest, of forwarding my letters without delay, and of refraining from further bloodshed. It was true, I said, that I had no power to recognize any one as Mehtar, but they could take it as certain that Amir-ul-Mulk would not improve his chances of gaining the favour of the Government if he continued to be so ruthless towards those who had incurred his enmity in the past. It was a great satisfaction to me to learn afterwards that this warning had the desired effect.

I decided to meet my visitor at the step leading on to the *chabutra*, on which I caused a carpet and two chairs to be placed. I instructed Rab Nawaz Khan to keep close to me throughout the interview and to seat himself on the ground slightly behind me and between me and Amir-ul-Mulk, who was to sit on my left. When a Chief is received by a British officer in India, it is usual for the latter to place his guest on his right. On this occasion I purposely placed Amir-ul-Mulk on

my left so that both he and his followers might realize that I was determined to do nothing which would imply recognition of his claim to the rulership. The more important of Amir-ul-Mulk's followers were to be seated in a semicircle on the carpet in front of us and the remainder were to stand on the ground on either side of and in front of the *chabutra*. Naik Narain Singh and his seven Sikhs were to be drawn up with loaded rifles about twenty yards behind the chairs. I decided to wear uniform, but not to carry a revolver. Rab Nawaz Khan obtained my permission to conceal a revolver under his coat. He told me afterwards that in the event of treachery he had determined to do his utmost to kill Amir-ul-Mulk. He had for some years been on friendly terms with Nizam-ul-Mulk, and it was not unnatural that he should harbour a feeling of hatred for his murderer. I told Narain Singh that, though I had every reason to hope that the meeting would terminate peacefully, it was possible that an attack might be made on me, and that, in that event, I wished him to fire on the Chitralis. I thought that, if the Sikhs opened fire, the Chitralis would probably take cover behind the wall enclosing the garden, and that the Sikhs might thus have a better chance of retiring to the house, where they could offer a stouter resistance to the enemy. Narain Singh, a very fine specimen of the Jat Sikh, both as regards soldierly bearing and physique, heard my remarks very coolly. He was an admirable non-commissioned officer, and I can never feel sufficiently grateful to him and his seven comrades for the devoted manner in which they watched over me during the week intervening between the murder of the late Mehtar and the arrival of the detachment of fifty Sikhs from Mastuj under Subadar Gurmukh Singh. During those days they got very little sleep and the strain on their endurance was very considerable. They took it all very calmly, but it was obvious that they were very much in earnest about performing their duty and went so far as to refuse the rum I offered them for fear that it might render them less wakeful. When I repeated the offer Narain Singh informed me they all had agreed together to take no rum or opium until the arrival of reinforcements. It was a privilege to be associated with such men.

Punctually at the time appointed Amir-ul-Mulk arrived. A considerable crowd, many carrying rifles, accompanied him. A common-looking man wearing a smart velvet coat and *sáfar* edged with gold lace, such as is usually given as a dress of honour at Government durbars, and carrying a Snider carbine walked immediately behind him and stood close to his chair afterwards. This was the Kalash Kafir, who had fired the fatal shot at Nizam-ul-Mulk. I met Amir-ul-Mulk at the step leading to the *chabutra*, and showed him to his chair. When he had taken his seat I noticed that

he carried a loaded Martini Henry carbine which he placed on his lap with the muzzle almost touching my leg. His hand was clammy and his face haggard, and he was obviously very ill at ease. Plain and stupid-looking, he was a great contrast to the handsome and intelligent Nizam-ul-Mulk. He left the speaking to his uncle, Mehtarjau Mohamed Ali Beg, and himself hardly opened his mouth the whole time he was with me. Mohamed Ali Beg repeated the statement made the previous day that Amir-ul-Mulk realized that he had done wrong in killing his brother, but that, as he had done so in self-defence, he trusted the offence would be overlooked. He added that the whole country was resolved to accept Amir-ul-Mulk as Mehtar and that the Assembly hoped, therefore, that I would recognize him as the legitimate ruler and that I would be his friend in the same way as my predecessor had been the friend of Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Once more I replied that I had no power to recognize any one and that the amount of friendly support which would be afforded to Amir-ul-Mulk would depend on how he and his adherents behaved. I continued my harangue by advising the assembly to wait quietly until I should receive orders from my Government and refrain from killing their fellow countrymen. I concluded by reassuring them about the coming of the troops from Gilgit and said the strength of the force to be sent would depend mainly on their own behaviour. I also stated that, though I was unaware what action my Government would take with regard to the Mehtarship, I could promise them that there was no intention of annexing their country and that we had no wish to interfere with their laws and customs, in short, that the fate of their country was in their own hands. There was nothing more to be said, and Amir-ul-Mulk rose to go. I escorted him to the edge of the *chabutra* and Rab Nawaz Khan went as far as the gate of the garden with him; as he was returning to me he overheard one of those who had accompanied Amir-ul-Mulk, an old Khushwakté Adamzada named Shahid-ul-Aman, remark that it was a waste of time to discuss the situation with me, and that it would be much better to kill me at once in the same way as Hayward Sahib had been killed at Darkot.¹

¹ I have already referred to the murder of Hayward in 1870; Shahid-ul-Aman was one of those present at the murder. He was appointed headman of Reshun after Nizam-ul-Mulk's murder, and when the detachment under Lieutenants Edwards and Fowler (now Brigadier-General Edwardes and Lieut.-General Sir John Fowler) reached that village in March 1895 he took a prominent part in the fighting which ended in the annihilation of the detachment and the treacherous capture of the two officers.

Long after peace had been restored in the summer of 1895 (Mehtar Shuja-ul-Mulk then being a minor) it was reported to me that the Adamzadas of Reshun led

It may be readily imagined how relieved I was to get this meeting over without mishap. What I had feared most was that one of the many loaded rifles might be discharged by mistake. In such an eventuality the effect on my unhappy and nervous young visitor and his excited following might have been disastrous. I now felt fairly confident that Amir-ul-Mulk's most influential advisers had determined, for a time at any rate, to follow my advice with a view to ingratiating themselves with the Government of India.

I wrote again that evening to Mr. Robertson describing the meeting with Amir-ul-Mulk. I expressed the opinion that Amir-ul-Mulk was a mere puppet in the hands of Sher Afzal's party, who would not hesitate to kill him should it be necessary in Sher Afzal's interests to do so. I also stated that Sher Afzal's adherents had sent urgent messengers to Kabul to beg him to come at once to Chitral. I added that although the men who had most influence at the moment were distinctly adverse to us, it was of some comfort to me to be able to report that so far no men of importance from the Mastuj district with the exception of Mohamed Rafi, the Hakim of Laspur, had come in to join Amir-ul-Mulk. I also wrote that I was doing my best to collect supplies and that I hoped to be able to procure about eighty maunds of wheat.

As I was on the point of closing this letter the Jemadar informed

by Shahid-ul-Aman were concealing some of the rifles captured from our men in the above-mentioned fighting. I considered the report to be reliable, and as the rifles were not produced when I demanded their surrender I quartered a strong body of Laspuri levies in the village with authority to feed themselves at the expense of the Adamzadas. The Laspuris, who had no love for the Adamzadas—there are no Adamzadas in the Laspur district—by whom they had been much oppressed in the past, lived at Reshun in what to them was undreamt-of luxury, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The plan met with complete success as within a very short space of time most if not all of the rifles were handed over to me and rifles concealed by the men of other villages were also brought in. I can remember to this day the disgust depicted on the face of Shahid-ul-Aman when he brought to me the rifle which he had appropriated as his own share of the spoil. It is customary for elderly Muhammadans to dye their beards red when they begin to turn grey and Shahid-ul-Aman adhered scrupulously to this fashion. I hardly recognized the hoary old sinner when he came to hand over the rifle with his beard as white as snow and looking generally unkempt and appreciably leaner than usual. He and most of Sher Afzal's followers had buried their rifles near one of the passes on the Bashkar border before surrendering at Dir to Major Harold Deane, the Chief Political Officer with Sir Robert Low's relief force, after the raising of the siege of Chitral fort. He had thus been obliged to make a long and arduous journey for a man of his years in order to retrieve the weapon. I must confess that I had no feeling of compassion for the old man when I compared his then sorry plight with the savage exultation with which he had no doubt participated twenty-five years before in the cruel slaughter of the solitary defenceless Englishman which has been so movingly related in Sir Henry Newbolt's poem, 'He fell among Thieves'.

me that Amir-ul-Mulk had sent urgent messengers to his brother-in-law, Umra Khan, the Khan of Jandol,¹ to be ready to help him in case of need. I added this report as a postscript.

About 11 a.m. on the 3rd January Aqsakal Fateh Ali Shah came to say that Amir-ul-Mulk wished to see Jemadar Rab Nawaz Khan again. I agreed, but before he went I had a satisfactory talk with Fateh Ali Shah as to the possibility of obtaining supplies for my escort. I formed the opinion that Fateh Ali Shah was trustworthy. As I have already mentioned, his daughter was married to Rab Nawaz Khan, with whom he had been on most friendly terms for some time past; he had been the first to inform the Jemadar of Nizam-ul-Mulk's murder and had come to meet me in the ravine; he had dispatched two messengers for me without letting Amir-ul-Mulk's supporters know, one of the messengers being his son Sultan Shah. Fateh Ali Shah now told me that he was my friend, and added that he was ready to join me with a hundred followers the moment he thought there was any chance of my being attacked; he thought that at present there was no danger of that, and that he could serve me best by remaining in the fort with Amir-ul-Mulk. I replied that I relied on him and that I would take care that his services were not forgotten.² He then went off with the Jemadar to the fort. The latter returned about 1 p.m. and reported that he had been received most favourably. All the chief men rose and greeted him as he walked through the courtyard and even Mehtarjau Mohamed Ali Beg, the leader of the anti-English party, displayed eagerness to pay him attention. Amir-ul-Mulk received the Jemadar in a friendly manner and reiterated his promises of loyalty to the Government and said he was entirely in our hands. When writing later in the day regarding this interview to Mr. Robertson I expressed the opinion that Amir-ul-Mulk was speaking the truth when saying he was entirely in our hands, that I did not think he had any reliable friends, and that I thought it was becoming more and more clear that he was merely a tool to be discarded whenever Sher Afzal might appear on the scene.

My next visitor was a very shifty young man named Aziz Beg, a son of the Mehtarjau Mohamed Ali Beg already mentioned.³ After professing his loyalty to the Government of India and his sorrow at the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk he produced after much hesitation a tiny piece of paper from his turban. The paper bore the seal of Shah Afzal (not to be confounded with Sher Afzal), a first

¹ Amir-ul-Mulk's own sister was the wife of Umra Khan.

² Fateh Ali Shah was afterwards appointed one of the three members of the Council of Regency during the minority of Shuja-ul-Mulk, the present Mehtar.

³ The affix *-jau* signifies son. Thus *Mehtarjau* means 'son of a Mehtar'.

cousin of the late Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk. Aziz Beg said he had been commissioned to give me a message from that prince. The message was to the effect that Shah Afzal intended to advance on Chitral with his supporters to avenge the death of his brother-in-law, Nizam-ul-Mulk; that he did not wish to become Mehtar himself; all he wanted was to serve my Government and to avenge the death of our friend; and before advancing he wished to have my advice. I replied to Aziz Beg that I was glad Shah Afzal had asked my advice; that I wished him to tell Shah Afzal and his supporters that I had no authority to recognize any one as Mehtar or to encourage any one to avenge Nizam-ul-Mulk's death; and that I hoped he and his friends would remain quietly at their homes until the wishes of the Government were ascertained. I never discovered whether Aziz Beg's professed mission was genuine or otherwise. Shah Afzal, from what I saw of him afterwards, appeared to me to be an unassuming elderly man of no force of character and not a person likely to attempt to avenge any one's death. I suspected at the time that Aziz Beg was sent by his father to try to test my sincerity.

The next arrival was Mast Khan, who was with Nizam-ul-Mulk when he was killed. He informed me on behalf of the late Mehtar's party that they would never recognize Amir-ul-Mulk as Mehtar and they trusted that his younger brother, Shuja-ul-Mulk, would be recognized in his stead. I replied that I would represent their wishes to the British Agent, but that I could do nothing more except to urge them to remain tranquil until the wishes of the Government of India were made known.

Late that night a messenger came from Mohamed Rafi, the Hakim of Laspur, to say that the people of the Mastuj district were anxious to know what attitude I wished them to adopt, but this messenger departed before I could give any reply. I also received messages from Nizam-ul-Mulk's mother and widow taunting me with my inaction.

Before going to bed I wrote again to Mr. Robertson and also sent a second letter to Harley. The latter would naturally be disappointed at being told to send Subadar Gurmukh Singh to Chitral in command of the fifty Sikhs instead of coming himself; I therefore explained that I was most anxious that a British officer should be at Mastuj to receive any important men who might come in and to reassure them that, if more troops arrived from Gilgit, they must not think that we intended to annex the country or to interfere with their customs of life. I added that if he were asked for advice, he should reply that all would be wise to remain quietly in their villages until the orders of the Government were received, and that meanwhile neither he nor I could indicate what the policy of Government

was likely to be. At the same time he could tell all who might come to him that he would let the British Agent know their names and that the Sarkar would remember them. If any men applied to him for protection he might permit a few to take up their residence in the fort, provided they agreed to give up their arms and to make their own arrangements for food.

That night, the 3rd January, a Council was held in the fort at which it was decided after some discussion that it was hopeless to attempt to oppose our Government. Some were for attacking me and opposing the march of the detachment of fifty Sikhs who were coming to join me from Mastuj. Fortunately these fire-eaters were overruled.

Judging from the fact, as I learnt afterwards, that my first letter to Mr. Robertson regarding the murder of the late Mehtar did not reach Gilgit till the 8th January I fancy the roads must have remained closed until the holding of this Council.

Fateh Ali Shah, when he came to me on the morning of the 4th of January, and told me of the Council meeting, added that Amir-ul-Mulk no longer made any secret of the fact that he was a supporter of Sher Afzal, and that he was heard to have declared at the moment when Nizam-ul-Mulk was shot, that he only acted on behalf of Sher Afzal, whose coming he would welcome.

On the 4th the wily old Kaka Khel timber merchant, Mian Rahat Shah, who had married a daughter of the Lut Mehtar, visited me.¹ Rahat Shah was loud in praise of Sher Afzal and suggested that I should advise Government to accept that prince as Mehtar. He also brought a message from Nizam-ul-Mulk's mother to the effect that Amir-ul-Mulk had confiscated most of her apparel and all her valuables and asking whether I could not prevail on Amir-ul-Mulk to treat her properly. I replied that I sympathized with the lady in her troubles, but that I could not interfere on her behalf.

The Jemadar visited the fort again the same day. I directed him to reassure the people once more that Government had no intention

¹ A considerable trade in deodar logs had been developed during Aman-ul-Mulk's reign. The procedure was that the trader paid an agreed sum to the Mehtar, who then arranged to fell the trees by forced labour, to saw them up, and to put the logs into the Chitral river, and in this manner the timber eventually reached Nowshera.

The logs were carefully marked before being consigned to the river, and the traders were thus enabled to recognize the timber for which each had paid. The Mehtar added appreciably to his revenue in this manner but not to his popularity, and I was told that Sher Afzal had promised to abandon the system of forced labour. Whether the latter would have kept this promise is doubtful. According to Colonel Durand, Rahat Shah was the most important man in Chitral in 1888, as Aman-ul-Mulk trusted his advice almost implicitly. His home was in the Peshawar district.

of annexing their country and that their treatment at our hands depended entirely on their own behaviour.

On the 5th and 6th January I received a number of visitors, but my time was mainly occupied in supervising payments for the supplies of flour and grain promised by Fateh Ali Shah, which now began to come in. The question of supplies was one of great urgency. I could not expect Subadar Gurmukh Singh's detachment to bring much with them from Mastuj, and it was imperative that I should without delay collect as much as possible in order to feed them for a prolonged period. I accepted the smallest quantities of grain or flour from the villagers and of *ghi* from the traders in the bazaar; I paid for them promptly and liberally and repeatedly warned all concerned that I would personally hear the complaints of any who might feel aggrieved at the treatment received by them at the hands of my subordinates. I hoped in this way to encourage all who had any articles of food to spare to come in quickly. The fact that supplies had commenced to come in at all was a good omen, and I was much encouraged.

To my great relief the detachment of fifty Sikhs under Subadar Gurmukh Singh arrived on the 7th January. All the men were fit, and the march had been uneventful. I heard afterwards that the Subadar had been most tactful in his dealings with the villagers during the march from Mastuj. He was evidently much relieved to have accomplished the journey without mishap. After he had seen to the comfort of his men and posted sentries he accompanied me for a short stroll. I took him to the high ground overlooking the polo ground whence a good view is obtainable of the valley in the direction of independent tribal country and Afghanistan. I can remember to this day how the keen old soldier's eyes glistened when he expressed his hope of meeting in stern conflict the enemy with whom his Sikh forbears under Ranjit Singh, the great Maharaja of Lahore, had striven in the past, a hope that was only too soon to be fulfilled.