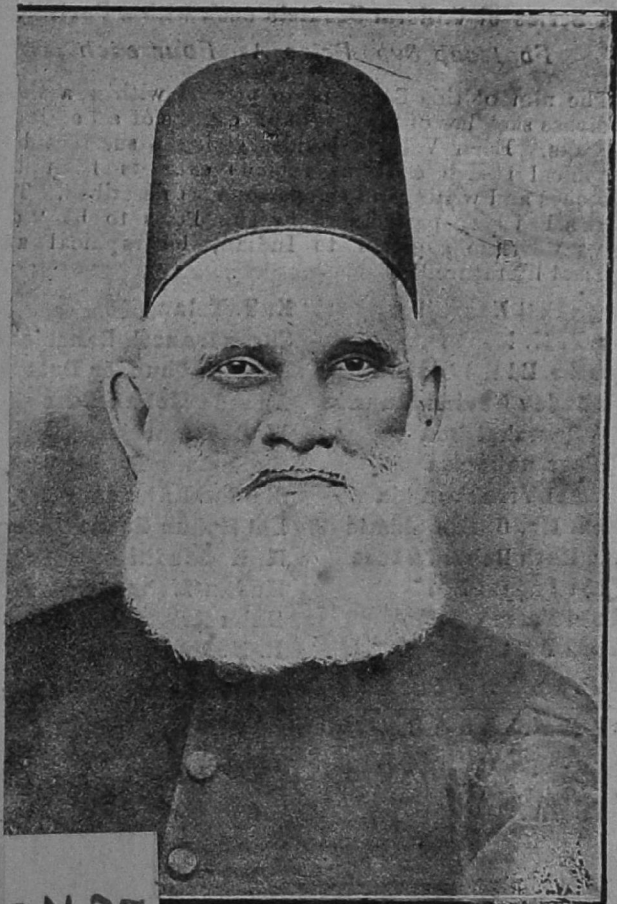


AWAB MOHSIN-UL-MULK.
A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND CAREER



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INTRODUCTORY.

It may be truly said that the noblest achievement of British rule in India consists in the introduction of an organised system of modern education. But the wise and generous policy of the Government in this respect would not have been of much avail, if its efforts had not been supplemented by those of private citizens who acted as pioneers of modern education amongst their own countrymen. It is due to the joint efforts of the two that we find a spirit of awakening pervading all classes of people and inducing them to pursue eagerly all the civilized arts of life.

In the case of Musalmans, particularly, the efforts of private individuals have played a very prominent part in making them realise the importance of modern education and all that it brings in its train. In fact, the credit of the present regeneration of Musalmans in India is mainly due to the efforts of that great sage of Aligarh, Sir Syed Ahmad. Among other reasons,

one chief cause of his success lay in the fact that owing to his sincerity of purpose he was able to gather together around him a band of devoted workers who were all men of exceptional abilities. The greatest name in that noble band is perhaps that of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, a brief sketch of whose inspiring life and career is here attempted.

EARLY LIFE.

Syed Mehdi Ali, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk was born at Etawah on the 9th December 1837. His father, Mir Zamin Ali, belonged to the famous Syed family of Etawah, while on his mother's side he was connected with the Abbaside family of Shaikhapur (Farrukhabad). In common with so many other distinguished men of the world, he was born of poor parents, whose sole asset was their noble lineage which they prized above all things. He could not, therefore, enjoy any of the advantages which wealth and riches offer; but he possessed in an abundant measure the advantages derived from good breeding and good society. In spite of the adverse circumstances under which his family laboured, due care was given to Mehdi Ali's early education. He was taught Persian and Arabic at first at his own house and when he gave proof of singular intelligence and taste for

learning, he was sent to Phapund, a place near Etawah, to receive his education from Moulana Inayat Husain, a scholar of repute. He fully availed himself of the teaching of his learned master and made considerable progress in his studies, with the result that every one formed a high opinion of his intellectual attainments.

ENTERS GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

His stay here was, however, a short one, because his private circumstances forced him to give up his studies and to seek some means of livelihood. He was able to get a post under the East India Company in the clerical line only with a pay of Rs. 10 per month. This was a death-blow to all the high hopes that were entertained about him, for such a poor reward was not expected for talents and learning like his. Little did they know that the same poor clerk was destined one day to become the leader of seventy millions of people and to leave behind him a record of brilliant achievements which would move to admiration generations yet unborn.

Mehdi Ali, however, was not discouraged; he performed his duties with great pains and care. He was in consequence made an Ahalmad in the memorable year of 1857. It

must be mentioned here that he and his family remained perfectly loyal to the British Government during the troublous times of the mutiny. There were strong temptations for him to act otherwise, for Etawah had passed for some time into the hands of the mutineers. But he successfully resisted these temptations and his devotion to his masters remained unshaken.

After the mutiny was over, he was made a Paishkar and subsequently a Sherishtadar. In 1861 he was appointed Tahsildar of Etawah in which position he gave much of his time to the improvement of the place. His untiring energy had a considerable share in the erection of the beautiful Government buildings and other public works which are found in the town. During this period he also compiled "the two well-known Vernacular works on Criminal and Revenue Laws." His work so much pleased Mr. Hume, the Father of the Indian National Congress, who was then Collector of Etawah, that he is reported to have said that Mehdi Ali had enough administrative capacity to be entrusted with the charge of a district.

Two years later he appeared in the competitive examination for Deputy Collectorship along

with many European candidates, and was able to secure the first position. In 1867, he was appointed a permanent Deputy Collector and posted to Mirzapur. In addition to this he also acted as Superintendent of Dudhi and Rai-Bareilli estates. It is needless to say that he performed these duties with his usual ability and care and established a name for himself in the service to which he belonged. One testimony only need be quoted here. When later he got employment in Hyderabad State, Sir William Muir, a Lieut.-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, wrote to him:—"When I heard of your transfer to Hyderabad, I felt sure from my experience of your intelligence and ability in your office at Mirzapur that you would distinguish yourself in your new sphere." How he justified these hopes will be presently seen.

SERVICE IN HYDERABAD STATE.

His fame travelled from the North to the distant South and attracted the notice of one of the greatest statesmen that India has ever produced—we mean Sir Salar Jung, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, Deccan. Sir Salar had a peculiar insight into the character of men and his discerning judgment seldom failed to form a correct estimate of any man with whom he came across.

By means of this remarkable gift he was able to gather together around him in the State the ablest men of Northern India, men like Mehdi Ali, Mushtaque Husain and the Bilgrami brothers. Among these men of fine talents the greatest perhaps was Mehdi Ali. He reached Hydrabad in the year 1874.

Here he had before him a vast field for the exercise of his abilities which had hitherto been allowed only a limited scope to manifest themselves. He was first appointed Inspector-General of Revenue and after some time Commissioner of Settlement and Survey Department. In both these capacities he earned the well-merited admiration of his superiors who were deeply impressed by the able manner in which he conducted the business committed to his charge. He did work of lasting good to the state by ensuring the fixity of tenure to the cultivators and by assessing fair rates on all lands. Writing to the Nawab, in 1886, the Hon'ble Sir Stuart Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, said : " Of your administration work in introducing the survey and settlement and in putting the revenue systems of the country on an exact and stable business I can only say that you therein rendered

services to H. H.'s Government, second only to the minister himself, and I regard the fact that under the present trying circumstances the daily work of administration both here and in the interior goes on without any serious strain, is to a great extent due to your judgment, steadfastness, and capacity." It was he who introduced Urdu in place of Persian as the court language in the capital and the mofussil. The Legislative Acts of the State bear testimony to the amount of work he did as a Legislator. During this period, he induced the late Mr. Justice Mahomud to come to Hyderabad and give the final touches to the proposed legislation. Mr. Mahomud accepted the offer and drafted many an important Act of the State and Legislature. Two years later Sir Salar Jung made him his own Revenue Secretary in which position he proved to be of great help to him and gained his full confidence. In 1884, he rose to be the Financial and Political Secretary on a monthly salary of Rs. 2,800. As a mark of recognition of the remarkable services which he rendered while in this office, he was awarded the title of Munir Nawaz Jung Mohsin-ud-Dowlah Mohsin-ul-Mulk. Henceforth his own name went into background, and he was

known to the world by his last title, viz., Mohsin-ul-Mulk.

He was subsequently entrusted with the delicate task of appearing before a Special Committee in London in Sirdar Diler Jung's case, and he acted with such admirable prudence and discretion and so fully justified the confidence placed in him that he gained the goodwill and pleasure of H. H. the Nizam. While on this duty, he got an opportunity to see all the great Englishmen of the time upon whom he made a very favourable impression. Mr. Gladstone was so charmed with the talents of this Indian Musalman that he continued his correspondences with him as long as he lived.

The following extract from a letter of Salar Jung II., which we are enabled to insert through the courtesy of a relative of the late Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, will show the extent of the influence and confidence which he enjoyed with that great minister, Sir Salar Jung, and his son. His words translated into English run as follows :

“ The value of the services which you rendered to my late father during the period when he was minister, and of the assistance which he received from you, was known only to him. He regarded

you as his true friend and sincere well-wisher. He had so much confidence in you that he mentioned your name in his will. There can be no greater mark of confidence. Whatever you did during my time and the honest and truthful assistance which you rendered me was such as I could not have expected even from a very near relation of mine. I am and will for ever remain thankful to you and will never forget your services."

After his return from England he continued in his office till the year 1893 when he had to leave Hyderabad under circumstances which so largely govern the destinies of the people in Native States. He fell a victim to the factious designs of some interested persons, and the consequence was that the State lost one of its most able officers. But the loss of Hyderabad was the gain of the entire Muslim community. He got a pension of Rs. 800 a month and settled at Aligarh which was to be the scene of his future labours. He now devoted all his time and energies to the cause of Muslim progress in India.

HIS CONNECTION WITH SIR SYED AHMAD.

It must not, however, be supposed that it was only after his retirement from service that he gave

his attention to the welfare of Indian Musalmans. On the contrary, their welfare and advancement were ever present in his mind long before he finally settled at Aligarh, and he was giving all possible help to Sir Syed in all the schemes which he undertook for the uplift of his backward community. To trace his connection with the mission of Sir Syed, one has to go back to the year 1863. It was in this year that Sir Syed Ahmad published his commentary on the Bible which raised a storm of indignant criticism amongst the orthodox circles of the Musalmans. Mehdi Ali also wrote a letter to Sir Syed in which he went so far as to call him an apostate. After some months he had occasion to see Sir Syed; and was so profoundly impressed that a considerable change came in the ideas which he had entertained about him, and Mehdi Ali was entirely won over to the side of the man whom he had not hesitated to call an apostate. A few visits more had strengthened that bond of friendship between these two great men which lasted for life.

His love and respect for the great reformer grew with the lapse of years and he came to be regarded as his chief disciple. Sir Syed also had a very high opinion of the talents

of his friend and looked upon him with feelings of love not unmingled with respect. The nature of the relations which existed between them can best be realised by some letters of Sir Syed which he wrote to his friend from time to time. They give evidence at once of the love, the admiration and the respect which the great Syed felt for his devoted friend. In an article in the "Tahzibul-Akhlaque" (the "Social Reformer"), Sir Syed wrote as follows:—"Moulvi Mehdi Ali's learning, personal merits, charming conversation, sincerity, honesty and eloquence are such that our community, had not its mind's eye been blind, would have been proud of him."

That this friendship proved of immense value to the community is beyond question. Mehdi Ali shared with Sir Syed all the anxious cares which beset him in his great task. He came forward to help him with money whenever it was needed for his many schemes for the welfare of Musalmans. For this purpose he neither spared his purse nor hesitated to make a demand on that of his friends. Specially his efforts to secure for the M. A. O. College a handsome annual donation from the Hyderabad State will ever be remembered with gratitude.

It seems desirable to quote here the words of Shamsal Ulema Altaf Husain Hali, the famous poet and biographer of Sir Syed, in which he bears testimony to the valuable assistance which Mohsin-ul-Mulk rendered to Sir Syed. He says :—

If we omit on this occasion to make mention of one who proved of immense help to Sir Syed in all his works, we will leave an important secret of Sir Syed's success undescribed. Need we say we refer to Mohsin-ul-Mulk on whose shoulders has, by the unanimous consent of the whole community, fallen the mantle of Sir Syed. It was he who was the first to understand Sir Syed and to realize the sincerity of his mission. It was he who fathomed the depth of his ambitions and realised the greatness of his aims. He sided with him when there was none to stand by him, and he helped him when there was none from whom he could expect help. In England Sir Syed was writing the "Essays on the life of Mohammed"; in India, Mehdi Ali was collecting material for the same. While the former was getting the book printed in England, the latter was collecting in India and sending him contributions for the expenses of publication. While on his return from England, Sir Syed desired to form a committee for the purpose of the educational advancement of the Musalmans, he was in a state of utter despair, because there was no hope of the realisation of the dreams which he had cherished. Mehdi Ali went from Mirzapur to Benares and was the means of restoring Sir Syed's drooping spirits, the consequence being that the committee was successfully formed. When in order to ascertain the reasons why the Musalmans did not avail themselves of the Government Schools and Colleges, the Committee advertised prizes for the best three essays on the subject, Mehdi Ali with great labour wrote a lengthy essay which was regarded to be the best of all. He, however, refused to take the prize which was worth Rs. 500, and it was awarded to the writer of the next best essay.

AS A WRITER.

The help which Mehdi Ali rendered through his mighty pen had a considerable share in the success of the cause advocated by Sir Syed. It dates from 1870. It was in this year that Sir Syed Ahmad started his famous paper, the "Tahzi-bul Akhlaque" (the "Social Reformer"). The objects of the journal were to promote reforms in the social life of the Musalmans and to present Islam in its original state of purity and simplicity freed from the superstitious ideas that had crept into it through centuries of ignorance. Besides, the literary style of the paper was also a great improvement on what then commonly existed. In fact, it was a distinct landmark in the history of Urdu literature, for it might be safely said that it was this journal which laid the foundations of modern Urdu literature.

The achievement of these objects was full of difficulties, for it was no easy task to uproot the long cherished passions and prejudices of the people and to introduce them to novel ideas in a novel fashion. In this difficult task, Sir Syed received the greatest help from Mohsin-ul-Mulk. His brilliant articles formed one of the most at-

tractive features of the journal. They were mainly religious or historical and displayed in an abundant degree the vast knowledge possessed by the writer. His chief concern was to show to the Musalmans those noble features of Islam which had been suppressed on account of ages of ignorance and bigotry. Any one who reads his writings is sure to be struck with the scholarship and breadth of view which characterised them. In his style are found singular force, ease and beauty. He has a fine gift of making himself clear by means of choice metaphors and similies. As a result of these contributions to the "Tahzibul Akhlaque," he has secured for himself a unique place in modern Urdu literature.

It will be of interest to know that the style adopted by him in these articles was entirely different from that of his earlier writings. His older style was that which was so common prior to the establishment of the "Tahzibul Akhlaque." It abounded in flowery language and was full of bombast and tinsel which were indulged in at the sacrifice of sense and meaning. The later style presents a marked contrast to the old. It is simple, elegant and graceful. In fact, on comparing the two, one wonders how the same man

could have written in styles so widely different.

Hali, the biographer of Sir Syed, has the following with regard to the writings of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk :—"In his writings, Sir Syed always used to rebuke and reproach the Musalmans and to point out the mistakes of the old Ulema. He committed his views to paper without corroborating them with the sayings of the men of old. On the contrary, Syed Mehdi Ali stimulated the hearts of the Musalmans by describing to them the achievements of their ancestors. Whatever he wrote in support of Sir Syed, there was in it reference to the standard and reliable authorities of old. Most of his articles are treatises of fairly considerable size, which have been written with great research and labour."

The late Moulana Shibli, the greatest Muslim historian of Modern India, says : "In the field of literature he can claim to equal the most renowned writers. His is a style of writing which is peculiarly his own."

These are testimonies of no mean value, and they give us a fair idea of his eminent position in the realm of literature.

It is a pity that a writer like him should not have left us any great work except these occasional

articles. The only book written by him is "Aâyat Bayyanat," which deals with a controversial subject of the Islamic faith. It will not be too much to say that his scholarship and power of expression were such that if he had devoted more of his energies to this department of activity only, he would have remained second to none amongst the renowned authors of modern India. His other pursuits, however, did not allow him to give much of his time to literary labours. Several books, however, were written or translated from other languages into Urdu at his instance. It may be interesting to know that we are, in a way, indebted to him for the very remarkable Urdu translation of the "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science," which Mr. Zafar Ali Khan did at his instance.

ACTIVITIES IN THE CAUSE OF MUSLIM EDUCATION.

In 1893, as we have said, he finally settled at Aligarh. From this date onwards one could see Mohsin-ul-Mulk taking an active part in all the communal movements. He revived the "Tahzibul Akhlaque," which was dead and infused a new life into the "Aligarh Institute Gazette." He tried to raise the tone of the institution by freely mixing with the students of the College and discussing

with them various topics of interest. He was a familiar figure in the College Debating Society, where he took part in the debates of the students and by his example set before them a high ideal of speaking. His greatest work, however, consisted in the popularizing of what is known as the Aligarh Movement. It was through the Moham-medan Educational Conference that he did this missionary work. His fine eloquence served him here in very good stead. He first made his mark as a speaker in 1890 at the fifth Annual Session of the Educational Conference held at Allahabad, at which the late Syed Mahmood welcomed him in a Persian poem. Before this it was not generally known that he had in him the gift of public speaking in so eminent a degree. He was twice elected to preside over the deliberations of the Conference, an office in which he acquitted himself with great tact and ability.

After the death of Sir Syed he infused a new life into the Conference, which seemed to have also breathed its last with its founder. He carried the torch of learning to distant parts of the country such as Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. He removed from the popular mind all misconceptions as regards its objects and secured public

confidence and sympathy. The religious views of Sir Syed were responsible to a large extent for the antagonistic attitude which the orthodox Muslim Ulema adopted against this body. Sir Syed did not care to bring them over to his own side, but Mohsin-ul-Mulk was more tactful and conciliatory in this respect. He believed that their support was extremely necessary in order to secure for their great work the sympathies of the Musalman public in general. On one occasion he expressed his views on the subject in the following words:—

“Gentlemen! Remember and remember well that we can never secure any appreciable amount of success in our endeavours without the help of that revered and respected body of Ulema (the learned of the old type). Our feeble efforts alone cannot be of any great avail to our community. Whatever we are doing in our present state and have been doing since a fairly long time, have affected only a limited number of people. Only a few persons have begun to share our views and our efforts. . . . A large majority of our community does not listen to our voice, and we have no means of introducing the enlightened ideas to the masses. But the voice of that body of men who hold sway over the hearts of the entire

community, will be listened to by every Musalman, from Peshawar to Burmah, and from Kashmir to Madras. Gentlemen ! There can be no doubt that Musalmans, however ignorant and imprudent they might be, have a heart which is full of love for Islam and a temper which is inflamed with religious fervour. They will never do anything which will appear to them contrary to Islam and will never walk on the path which, in their opinion, leads to a direction opposite to their faith. And to them Islam is nothing but what is expounded by the Ulema. Therefore, if we really wish for communal progress, our first concern must be to make them share our views and to keep them in the forefront."

Now that the essential necessity of Western education is recognised on all hands, it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the difficulties which he had to encounter in this respect. He had to deal with a body of men who were nourished in the strongest possible prejudices and who refused to listen to the voice of reason. They moved within a narrow world of their own and had no desire to get beyond that. They urged with all the vehemence at their command

that English education would lead the Musalmans to disaster and unhesitatingly declared its promoters infidels. Wherever he went Mohsin-ul-Mulk was greeted with fatwas of Kufar (infidelity) and every attempt was made to make his mission a failure.

This active antagonism continued as late as 1904, when the annual session of the Mohammedan Educational Conference took place at Lucknow under the presidency of Mr. (now Sir) Theodore Morison, former Principal of the M. A. O. College. Here, Moulvis of both the sects of Islam, Shias and Sunnis, for once combined to alienate the sympathies of Musalmans from the Aligarh Movement. Mohsin-ul-Mulk, with the tact and persuasion that were entirely his own, explained the whole truth to the leading Moulvis, many of whom were convinced of the error of their ways and gave up the opposition. Henceforth all opposition died away and the difficult task of enlightening an influential and bigoted section of the public was completed.

AS HON. SECRETARY OF THE M.A.O. COLLEGE.

In 1897, the Muslim community suffered a great loss in the death of Sir Syed Ahmad and all eyes turned towards Mohsin-ul-Mulk for the

realisation of the dreams cherished by the veteran leader. After a short time during which Syed Mahmood acted for his father, the Board of Trustees of the M. A. O. College, Aligarh, elected Mohsin-ul-Mulk as their Honorary Secretary. The brilliant record of his achievements proved that their choice could not have fallen on a better man. The devoted disciple not only kept up the traditions of his chief, but added more lustre and glory to them.

The time when he assumed office was perhaps the most critical in the history of the College. On account of the embezzlement by a manager of the office of more than a lakh of rupees which had occurred in the last days of Sir Syed and which had told greatly upon his health, the finances were in a shattered condition. The differences between the trustees themselves had risen to the highest pitch. The death of Sir Syed at such a juncture brought the College very nearly to the verge of ruin. Mohsin-ul-Mulk boldly met the situation and with his characteristic zeal and ability set matters right. The clouds which had threatened the existence of the College soon melted away and there dawned an era of progress and prosperity.

The financial crisis was averted, as he was able to secure by means of his tact and eloquence the patronage of men like H. H. the Agha Khan and Sir Adamji Peerbhoy and the sympathy of the public in general [and to put the College on a sound financial basis.

One is struck with wonder at the progress which the College made in every direction during his term of office. In 1898 the number of students was 343 and the annual income was Rs. 76,747-5-4. At his death (1907) the number of students had risen to 800, and the annual income to Rs. 1,53,655-12-5. These figures speak for themselves and need no comment. The College was graced by the visits of some of the most distinguished personages, *e.g.*, H. R. H. the Prince of Wales and H. M. the Amir of Afghanistan. In short, he considerably raised the position of the institution and proved himself in every way a worthy successor of Sir Syed Ahmed.

Mention must be made here of his strenuous labours in connection with the proposed Moham-medan University. On the death of Sir Syed, he preached it far and wide that the best monument that the community could erect to the memory of its great benefactor was to turn his long-cherished

dream into an actual fact by raising the M. A. O. College to the status of a University on the lines of Oxford and Cambridge. Though that great dream is still unrealised, Mohsin-ul-Mulk did his part of the work by familiarising the people with the aims and objects which the promoters of the movement had in view. Whenever the time may come to see the fruition of these efforts, Mohsin-ul-Mulk's name will deserve to be remembered for paving the way for the successful achievement of the end.

HIS SHARE IN POLITICS.

Mohsin-ul-Mulk's efforts for the well-being of the Musalmans were not confined to matters educational only; he contributed no small share to the political activities of the community also. Soon after the death of Sir Syed, there arose a question which was of great political significance for the Musalmans. It was the Urdu-Nagari question which assumed serious proportions on account of a resolution of the Local Government which seemed to deal a death-blow to the native tongue of the Musalmans. Mohsin-ul-Mulk took an active part in the well-meaning agitation which followed and called together a representative meeting at Lucknow to enter a strong pro-

test against the action of the Local Government. He delivered a remarkable speech as chairman of that meeting and tried to describe in as clear a manner as possible the point of view of the Muslim community.

His participation in these proceedings was not, however, favourably viewed by Sir (now Lord) Antony Macdonell, the then Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; whose attitude towards the College became ominous. Matters went so far that Mohsin-ul-Mulk desired to resign the Honorary Secretaryship of the College that its interests might not suffer. Before very long, however, the reins of the Government passed into the hands of the sympathetic Sir James La Touche and everything resumed its normal condition. In justice to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, it must be said here that his silence at a later stage of the agitation was due not to any weakness of his own, as some said at the time, but to his anxiety that the interests of the College might not suffer.

His second appearance in the arena of politics was attended with more favourable circumstances and with more favourable results. It was in connection with the historic All-India Moham-

medan Deputation to His Excellency Lord Minto, with H. H. the Agha Khan as its head (1906). The idea originated from Mohsin-ul-Mulk who organised the deputation and to him was due all the credit of the success achieved.

As a result of this deputation, the importance of the Muslim community was recognised by the Government, and it was no longer to be considered as a negligible quantity in the affairs of the State. The reply given by Lord Minto to the address of the Deputation has, indeed, rightly been termed the Magna Charta of the community. No amount of gratitude which the Musalmans may feel can be too great for this remarkable service rendered by Mohsin-ul-Mulk in the closing years of his life.

Apart from the recognition of their right, the Deputation proved to the Musalmans of immense importance in another way. It awakened them to the necessity of political activity from which they had hitherto strenuously kept aloof. As a result of this awakening came to existence that well-known organisation, the All-India Muslim League, which has since then served as an accredited exponent of enlightened Muslim opinion in India. In the formation of this League also Mohsin-ul-Mulk gave much valuable assistance.

These political movements of the Musalmans were subjected to much adverse criticism in some quarters. They were regarded as highly detrimental to the interests of the country in as much as they tended to widen the gulf which unfortunately existed between the Hindus and the Musalmans. This is no place to enter into a discussion on the correctness or otherwise of this idea; but we feel it our duty to say that the real intention of the promoters of these movements was not, as is supposed by some, to create or accentuate differences between the two sister communities of India. They aimed at no other object than to secure for the Musalmans what was their due. With regard to the relations of the two communities, it was their firm belief that in the union of the two races lay the salvation of India. The views expressed on the subject by Mohsin-ul-Mulk who took so prominent a part in all these movements will, we trust, be read with interest. At the Madras Session of the Educational Conference, he said :—

“As long as the Hindus and Musalmans of India are not sympathetic towards each other, and as long as they will not maintain friendly relations between themselves and treat each other

with generous and unprejudiced feelings, they will not deserve the title of fellow-countrymen. He, be he a Hindu or a Musalman, who does not strive to maintain and improve mutual friendly relations, sins against his community and his country."

On another occasion he observed :—

"I go so far as to say that the importance of co-operation is confined not only to Hindus and Musalmans; it extends equally to the Christians also. As long as these three do not make equal efforts to devise ways for the progress of the country, India will not be a Heaven but will be a Hell on earth."

LAST DAYS.

Mohsin-ul-Mulk's last days were disturbed by the unfortunate students' strike due to the tactlessness of a new Principal. His health was none of the best, shattered as it was by the heavy strain of work which he had to bear in his old age. He was at Simla when he was overtaken by his last illness. The object of his visit was to have a private conference with the Viceroy about the interests of the Musalmans involved in the then proposed scheme for the Reform of Councils. No pains were spared to secure the best medical

aid; the Viceroy was pleased to appoint his own Surgeon to attend on him. Alarming symptoms, however, soon developed themselves, and it was recognised that the end was near at hand. Two days before his death, he recited the Formula of Testimony and said: "Whatever I did for my community and country, I did with the best of intentions. If there was anything wrong, I should not be blamed for that, because my intentions were good and God knows them well." Then he asked his friends to take him or his remains to his home at Etawah to be laid in the dust beside his ancestors. On the 16th October 1907, he breathed his last and left behind him an entire community to mourn his loss. With considerable difficulty, the Trustees of the College secured the permission of his relatives to bury his remains at Aligarh. There in the compound of the College Mosque he sleeps his last sleep by the side of his illustrious predecessor, Sir Syed Ahmad.

The news of his death was received with profound sorrow throughout India. Messages of sympathy were sent to the Trustees by the highest officials of the Government, including the Viceroy and all the respectable Muslim men and bodies. His devoted services in the cause of his

community were universally acknowledged both in the press and the platform. His dying words convinced every one of the sincerity of his motives and sealed the lips of even those who in his lifetime lost no opportunity of criticising him.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

A word may be added with regard to the personal qualities of the departed hero. Mohsin-ul-Mulk combined in himself many qualities which contributed towards his success. He had a very high sense of duty and always did his work in a manner which gave entire satisfaction to his superiors. He was entirely a self-made man, for it was through his own exertions that he rose from a very low position in life to the summit of greatness. His assiduity and capacity for work were astonishing. He was a lover of knowledge for its own sake, for, notwithstanding the pressure of work which his duties entailed upon him, he always found time for reading books which included a wide range of subjects. He was extremely lavish with his money and gave much of it either to works of charity or to his relatives. In fact, he was generous to a fault.

He was a man of broad views and liberal ideas. By renouncing certain religious views of his fore-

fathers, he had early in life given proof of his rare courage and shown to the public that he was determined to carry out his convictions. As soon as he was convinced of the truth of a thing, he did not hesitate to declare his adherence to it, without caring for what other people would say or think of him.

A robust optimism pervaded his whole life—both private and public. Cheerfulness was a habit of his mind which went a long way towards recuperating his otherwise broken health. All his public utterances were marked with a spirit of optimism which refused to take notice of the dark side of the picture.

The secret of his success in public life lay in the winning manners and the charm of expression which he possessed in so remarkable a degree. His cheerful conversation charmed his hearers and stole away their hearts. Once a man came under his magic influence, he was sure ever to remain an admirer of his. It is impossible to omit to mention here the case of H. H. the Amir of Kabul. He came to visit the College with very strong prejudices, for he had heard all sorts of rumours against the education imparted there. Thanks, however, to the tact and charming con-

versation of Mohsin-ul-Mulk, he was extremely pleased with all he saw and went away with a very favourable impression upon his heart as might be easily inferred from the fact of his having made a handsome annual grant to the College.

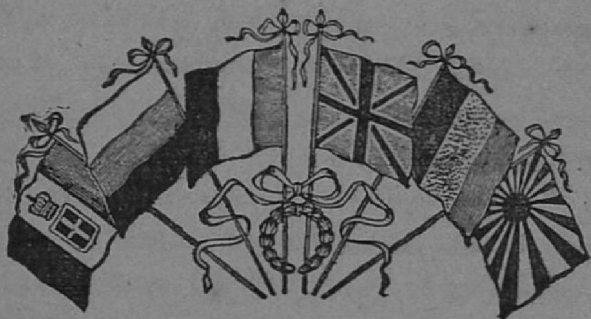
He had a large circle of personal friends not only among the Musalmans, but also among the high European officials of the State. He always used his private influence with them for the good of his community. This was the one guiding idea of his life ever since his connection was severed from Hyderabad. He cared neither for his personal comfort nor for any other object in the world. He centred all his affections on what is known as the Aligarh Movement and regarded the students of the College as his own children. The letters written by him to the students during the strike that has already been described, are a true index of his feelings. They give vent, in his own peculiar way, to the sincere love which he had for them and to his extreme anxiety for their welfare.

As regards his unrivalled gift of public speaking, it need only be said that he was a born orator. He could move his audience to tears or laughter, as it suited his purpose. Some of his

speeches have been collected and published in the form of a book. They are precious gems of eloquence likely to prove of inestimable value to one who wishes to study the art of Urdu oratory. Two of his lectures in which he has described the past civilisation of the Musalmans and the causes of their downfall, deserve special mention. One will find in them much useful and interesting information collected together in a beautiful form.

In short, one is astonished to see how various and varied were his accomplishments which have a claim upon our esteem and regard. He was not only a brilliant and effective orator, an able journalist, a renowned theologian, a formidable debator or a classical writer ; his fame rests equally upon his being a capable administrator, a veteran educationist and a successful social and political reformer. He was a man whose example may well inspire men with noble aspirations and whose memory will ever be cherished by Musalmans with feelings of love, respect, and gratitude. He is dead, but his name will ever live in the annals of Muslim progress in India. The Aligarh College is a standing monument to the exertions of that noble band of workers, of which Mohsin-ul-Mulk was so prominent a member.

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