

would jump up in wild excitement and go off with their hawks and their rifles, and leave the affairs of state to look after themselves.

All this seems very irregular, but the system has many good points about it, the chief of which is that the ruler and people see each other face to face, and know each other man to man. There is an excellent custom in Chitral, by which every man of importance in the country is expected to come down to the capital to attend these durbars for at least a couple of months every year, and each village has to send a contingent to serve the Mehtar, either in his guard or in some household capacity. An ebb and flow of men from the provinces to the capital is thus set up, and every man of any note becomes intimately acquainted with the Mehtar and the Mehtar with him, and the greater number of the lower classes also come to know their ruler personally. So intimately, indeed, does the Mehtar in this way become acquainted with his men, that I found Nizam-ul-Mulk knew the name, the personal history, and the character of nearly every man in his country. Since he was a small boy he had attended his father's durbars, and so, seeing year after year the relays of men coming to attend them, he had got to know every man of any position, and most of the common people as well. This personal intimacy between the ruler and the ruled, and the method by which the ruler administers justice and governs his country face to face with his people, and not by deputy and by paper, are really good points in the system of government in Chitral. I have related how despotic is the authority of this Mehtar, but the reader will see that by this system of durbars the people also have a voice in the conduct of the affairs of the country, and it would be impossible for a ruler to go far against the wishes of his people.

Though the Mehtar has so absolute authority, he is bound to consult, and perhaps even defer to, the wishes of the Adamzadas, or nobles, for he is not so much the ruler over a