

at ease about themes time-honoured in Chitral. Yet the forces and currents now at work in shaping its political destinies are not to be fathomed and gauged even in this seeming intimacy. I learned enough to realize that the use to be made of the full powers recently bestowed upon the Mehtar means something of a problem, if not for him, perhaps, at least for those called upon to watch their effects on the people.

Ten years' administration virtually under British guidance must necessarily have produced deep-going changes even among the most conservative hill-men. A return to the patriarchal despotism of former Mehtars seemed all the more fraught with risks as the presence of a British garrison effectively closes that traditional safety-valve, murder or usurpation by a conveniently handy rival. The very *pax britannica* must earlier or later raise grave economical problems; for the population, no longer checked by slave-selling and feudal fighting, is bound to increase rapidly, while the reserve of arable land still unoccupied is likely to be exhausted within a measurable period. The problem is how to allow due scope to the chief's legitimate wish to rule in fact as well as in name, without at the same time rendering the people discontented with the power which has indirectly brought about all these changes. May it be solved by forethought and without bitter experiences on either side!

My return visit to the Mehtar gave an opportunity of seeing his castle, the site of the memorable siege of 1895. It still retains the high square towers, then the mainstay of the defence, and around it the groves of old Chinars from which the Afghan sharpshooters found it so easy to harass the garrison. But various alterations and additions to the great pile of rubble and timber made it difficult to locate all the incidents. The mosque and open galleries in the outer court of the castle still show plenty of quaint old wood-carving. Curious, too, is the high iron-plated gate through which more than one successful pretender has forced his way to the blood-stained 'Takht' of Chitral. Outside it, near a praying platform shaded by magnificent Chinars, there rises a small structure, ugly