

# The Portrayal of Sultan Muhammad Khan in “A Vizier’s Daughter; A Tale of the Hazara War”

Noor-ul Amin, Sajjad Khan

## Abstract

This study analyzes the novel ‘A Vizier’s daughter- A Tale of the Hazara War’ by Lillias Hamilton, who worked as court physician of Ameer Abdur Rahman in 1890s. The novel is a fictionalized account of her personal Afghan experiences, molded into a story about the Amir’s Chief Secretary Sultan Muhammad Khan and a Hazara girl, Gul Begum, as the main characters. Overall, the novel signifies the tragic life of Afghans in general and the Hazaras in particular. The author has portrayed Sultan Muhammad Khan as a self-satisfied court favorite that eventually ends up as an overburdened official. The novel was first published in 1900 in London. Thus, it falls under domain of The Victorian era (1837-1901). At that time, Sultan Muhammad Khan worked as Ambassador of Afghanistan in England. The novel was published with his permission and recognition that his character was very much like him. The appendix at the end of the paper contains the original text of the novel where the Chief Secretary explains ‘the Great Game’ to the Hazara Vizier.

Key Words: Amir Abdur Rahman, Lillias Hamilton, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Hazara, Novel, 1890s Afghanistan, Historical fiction, Victorian Literature, The Great Game.

## 1 Introduction

Historical Novel is a form of fictional narrative which reconstructs history and re-creates it imaginatively. It has a fictional story set against the background of a factual historical movement. There are generally both historical and fictional characters in such narratives. Though writing fiction, a good historical novelist researches his or her chosen period thoroughly and strives for verisimilitude. The Novel “A Vizier’s Daughter- A Tale of the Hazara War” by Dr. Lillias Hamilton is a historical novel about the creation of modern Afghanistan during the reign of Abdur Rahman Khan<sup>1</sup> (r.1880-1901). The Novel is the story of the life and sufferings of a Hazara girl, Gul Begum, involving some of prominent real life people of

---

<sup>1</sup>Abdur Rahman Khan became the king of Afghanistan in 1880. The British recognized him as the Amir of Afghanistan, and later brokered various agreements with him, including the famous Durand Line, which marks the border between Afghanistan and today Pakistan.

the time like Ameer Abdur Rahman Khan himself and his Chief Secretary, Sultan Muhammad Khan, signifying the tragic life of Afghans in general and Hazaras in particular during 1890s. The writer of the Novel has represented Afghanistan and the people at court especially the Chief Secretary as she saw them. The initial chapters of the Novel are set in the Hazara hills while the rest shows life at Kabul. It also pictures the persecutions of Hazaras when their territory was incorporated in the mainland Afghanistan during the Hazara Wars (1885-1893).<sup>2</sup>

Sultan Muhammad Khan, the protagonist of the Novel, was originally from Kala Kader, a district of Sialkot Pakistan, and was hired as translator by the Afghan court due to his command on Persian (Dari) and English. He served in the Afghan Royal Court from 1888 to 1898 in different capacities, eventually rising to the position of Mir Munshi Aala (Chief Secretary). He developed friendly relations with the author during her time as Amir Abdur Rahman's physician.

## 2 About the Novel

"A Vizier's Daughter- A Tale of the Hazara War"<sup>3</sup> is the first English novel set in Afghanistan. It was published in 1900 and belongs to late Victorian era. Thus, it precedes Rudyard Kipling's (1865-1936) famous Novel "Kim"<sup>4</sup> which depicts "The Great Game" between the Czarist Russia and British India in the Nineteenth Century. A Vizier's Daughter depicts life in Afghanistan in the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century when Ameer Abdur Rahman was incorporating the free areas within and around his state into Afghanistan. Hamilton has stated in the introduction of the Novel, "I have written A Vizier's Daughter, every character in which is drawn from a model, and should, therefore, as far as it goes, give an accurate description of one phase, at any rate, of Afghan life." [1]

The Novel carries much of the theoretical assumptions and characteristics associated with the late Victorian literature.<sup>5</sup> It was during the early Victorian period that "Novel" became the leading form of literature in English with themes of virtues and vice. Lillias Hamilton in "A Vizier's Daughter- A Tale of the Hazara War" has shown fatalism: a pessimistic assessment of the inability of humanity in dealing with a changing social environment. We see that the main character of the Novel, Gul Begum, has no control over the evil tiding of fate that transforms her from the arrogant daughter of a Vizier to a slave girl in Kabul. It also has the trait of naturalism<sup>6</sup> in its depiction of the inability of humans at the face of

<sup>2</sup>The first Hazara uprising against the Amir was crushed and resulted in the Amir extending his rule in the years 1888. The second Hazara uprising was in 189 while the third occurred in 1893. The Hazaras were forcibly displaced from Hazarajat and many fled to Pakistan, to north Afghanistan and to Iran.

<sup>3</sup>All the spellings are taken as they occur in the Novel

<sup>4</sup>Kim was published serially in McClure's Magazine from December 1900 to October 1901 and first published in book form by Macmillan & Co. Ltd in October 1901.

<sup>5</sup>Victorian literature refers to the literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) commonly known as the Victorian era. The Victorian period formerly begins in 1837 (the year Victoria became Queen) and ends in 1901 (the year of her death). The period is sometimes dated from 1832 (the passage of the first Reform Bill).

<sup>6</sup>Naturalism was formulated by French writer Emile Zola as a branch of literary realism under the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution. Its main premise is that humans are devoid of free will or moral choice. Naturalism has gained a reputation for pessimism.

overpowering fate. Another aspect of the Novel is the orientalist depiction of Afghanistan which is a part and parcel of the western writing about the orient.[2] The central theme of the Novel thus revolves around the miseries of life in Afghanistan under ‘the Iron Ameer’ Abdur Rahman.

The Novel is written from an omniscient point of view having an all knowing narrator. The subject matter is provided by the personal experiences of the author during her stay in Kabul as the court physician of Ameer Abdur Rahman. The language of the Novel is vivid, describing scenes to the minute details. The poetic flow of the Novel brings vibrant images to the readers mind.

### 3 About the Author

Lillias Anna Hamilton was born in New South Wilson 7th February, 1858. Shortly after Lillias’s birth, her family returned to Scotland. She got admission at Cheltenham Ladies College in 1874. At college, the school’s principal, Dorothea Beale <sup>7</sup>, greatly influenced her and aroused in her the passion for the service of humanity. She opted for medical services, and was trained firstly at the Workhouse Infirmary in Liverpool as a nurse and then as a doctor, she graduated from Edinburgh University and the London School of Medicine for Women in 1890.[3] That year, she met Colonel Charles Joubert (1846-1935) of the Indian Medical service, who selected her to serve in India. She went to India, and started her own general practice in Calcutta (Kolkata).

In 1894 Lillias went to Afghanistan as the court physician of the Amir.[4] Her arrival in Kabul was prompted by the departure of Dr. John Alfrad Gray who remained the court physician of the Amir from 1888 to 1893.[5] She worked in that capacity for four years. She also organized a small hospital in the Kabul in addition to supervising a national program of smallpox vaccination. She left Afghanistan in 1898 and returned to England where she practiced as a consultant in London.[6] It was during this time that she wrote a fictionalized account of her experiences in Afghanistan in “A Vizier’s Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara war” published in 1900.

She also served as Warden of Studley Horticultural College for Women, in Warwickshire in 1908 and remained there until her retirement in 1924. She spent most of her retired life in southern France. She died thereon 13th of January in 1925 and was buried in the English Cemetery.[7] Lillias Hamilton also published another book “A Nurse’s Bequest” which deals with her experiences as a nurse in Liverpool. She has also written another Novel by the name of “The power that walks in the darkness”, a chilling account of the repressions in Kabul under Abdur Rahman.[8] It is unpublished and lying in the India office record, England.

### 4 Plot of the Novel

The beautiful and arrogant Gul Begum is the daughter of the vizier of a Hazara tribe. In the very beginning of the Novel, she is warned by an old fortuneteller of a miserable life ahead

---

<sup>7</sup>Dorothea Beale (1831 –106) was a suffragist, educational reformer, author and Principal of the Cheltenham Ladies’ College. St. Hilda’s was also founded by her in 183 as an Oxford hall for women.

which she disgustingly ignored. The Chief of the tribe, Wali Muhammad and his vizier, Ghulam Hussain are worried about the demand of the Amir of Afghanistan to pay tribute. They call the elder council to ponder over the matter. The council decides to send a peace delegation to Kabul.

In the royal court the Amir plans to unite all the land. The delegation is told that as the Hazaras are foreigners so they have to pay taxes and remains faithful; otherwise they have to face the royal armies. The royal army under the brutal Colonel Ferad Shah has already started the war on Hazara villages. The Colonel comes to know about the beauty of Gul Begum and sends a messenger to the Vizier to bring Gul Begum to the royal court. The Vizier lies to the messenger that Gul Begum has been wedded six months ago. In order to safeguard Gul Begum, she is sent to the house of Muhammad Jan in a mock wedding while the tribe starts war preparation. Muhammad Jan is a wicked person having no interest in the war and Gul Begum is very unhappy there. One day she escapes only to find that her village is devastated and that her mother wants her no more. The war temporarily stops in the winter and the vizier returns to his home. He takes Gul Begum back to Muhammad Jan's house where she spends few miserable months.

Meanwhile, an uprising by the Mullah is brutally crushed in Kabul. In the summer, Ghulam Hussain comes for Gul Begum and took her home. One night, Gul Begum hears some unfamiliar sounds. She wakes up her father who manages to escape the raiding royal soldiers guided by a spy none other than Muhammad Jan. Gul, along with many of her female villagers, is made captive and ordered to march to Kabul. On the way many young girls are selected by different commanders while other perished due to the hard journey. Gul, along with her mother and cousin, is delivered to Colonel Ferad Shah's palace. The much feared Colonel was out on a mission. Ferad's wife put them to work in the garden but they manage to escape and come to Kabul only to land in the slave market. Gul starts living filthily and whenever she is taken by a person, she acts stupidly and return to the slave market again. At last she is selected by the Chief Secretary's wife and starts living there as a servant.

The Chief Secretary enjoys the attention and favors of the king. Gul remains untidy for some time but when another claimant in the form of the old Mir appears, she pleads the Chief Secretary to keep her. The Chief Secretary promises her a trail and at last decides to keep her. Gul efficiently devotes herself to the work of the house and taking care of the Chief Secretary's pregnant wife who dies in the delivery along with the child. This blow devastates the life of the Chief Secretary and his interest in his job diminishes. He starts losing the favor of the Amir as many others in the court started filling the ears of the Amir against him. His brother comes to meet him and convinces him of going back to India but the Amir would not allow this. Meanwhile, Gul remains busy in her usual selfless devotion to the work of the Chief Secretary and care for his little daughter, Ayesha, though she longed for the free air of Hazara hills.

One day the vizier appears in the guise of a water-carrier and met the Chief Secretary who takes him to his house to stay for a night. Gul meets her father who was much relieved and thankful to find his daughter in safe hands and departs the next morning very satisfied. A few days later, a group of dancing gypsies comes to the house. Among them is the old fortuneteller who was badly treated by Gul. She makes another dreadful prophesy about Gul's dark future. The evil tidings are not far off as Gul's mother meets Muhammad Jan,

now a wealthy man, in the Bazar and searching for Gul. He soon finds out her hiding place. Gul is anxious about this new development and is further distracted by rumors about the Chief Secretary being out of favor in the court. She advises him to leave the country. Muhammad Jan manages to get the services of another servant girl, Gulsum, as his spy but Gul manages her tactfully by showing her assumed dislike for the Chief Secretary.

There were many in the court who aspired for the position of Chief Secretary for which time and again they hatched plots. The latest episode was of a forged letter in which the Chief Secretary proves his innocence by showing the original letter. The growing burdens compel the chief secretary to escape. Gul, on her part, makes an escape plan. She disguises herself as a male servant and leads her master towards a shrine in the Hazara hills. Muhammad Jan is in close pursuit of the two. An encounter takes place near the border in which Muhammad Jan is killed but not before he ends the miserable life of Gul with his knife while the Chief Secretary safely reaches India.

## 5 Depiction of Afghanistan in the Novel Case for Orientalism<sup>8</sup>

The claim of the author in the introduction of the Novel about the accurate and fair picture of life in Afghanistan is worth analyzing. The Novel shows Afghanistan as a chaotic place. There is no method. In the words of the writer, Afghanistan at that time was a place where, “There is no such thing as joy there. There is no such thing as peace, or comfort, or rest, or ease. There is never a moment when any one is sure he is not the subject of some plot or intrigue. There is no amusement, no relaxation; the people don’t know how to enjoy themselves.”[9]

Time and again the author allude to the absence of “esprit de corps” in Afghanistan. It is presented as a place where no one can be trusted. Suspicion rules the land. Every other man is considered a spy. The Afghans are shown as unruly, murderous, treacherous and lawless people. Court intrigue is a norm. The author describes a typical Afghan as “Idle, luxurious, treacherous, capricious [and] capable of the most unheard of cruelties”. Similarly, the author describes most Afghan well-to-do ladies are lazy and apathetic. This depiction of Afghans and Afghanistan is the continuation of the long tradition of “Orientalism” that started when the British Empire came into contact with the Afghans.[10]

A typical Hazara is described as,

“Wali Mohamed, the chief, was a typical Hazara, short, bullet-headed and pig-headed, but with a certain shrewdness, and an eye to his own interests, which made him very difficult to deal with.”[11]

Pakhtun’s hospitality is acknowledged in the following lines,

---

<sup>8</sup>The idea behind Edward Said concept of ‘Orientalism’ is to seek out origins in the coherence of description of the orient. It is about the manufacturing of the other and is mainly done for dominating them. Said argues that the way the west looks at the countries and people of the east is through a lens that distorts the actual reality of those places and those people. For further details see [2]

“Strangers may say that Afghans have many faults, but they cannot touch them in one thing – in the matter of hospitality”[12]

One interesting passage of the novel discusses the ‘Labor Question’ in Afghanistan. The character of Gul Begum is contemplating over the issue,

“And so the girl’s mind began working away at one of the great problems of life – the labour question – as it exists in Afghanistan, and saw the difference between the work of the man who has a bit of land of his own that he is cultivating for himself and for his children after him, and the work of the man who merely seeks to provide himself with food, from hour to hour and day to day. The one ”possesses the earth,“ and with it the joys of reaping the direct fruits of his labour, the other, though he earns his daily wage as best, or rather as worst, he can, is practically a slave, and has no interest beyond seeing how little he can do for the money paid him, and if possible leaving enough work undone to-day to oblige his employers to send for him again on the morrow”. [13]

## 6 Historical Context

The literary theory of ‘New Historicism’<sup>9</sup> argues that literature is not timeless but contextual. Texts are connected in complex ways to time period. The period covered by the Novel comprises the high point of rivalry between the Russian Empire and the British Empire to control Afghanistan and its surrounding regions commonly known as “The Great Game”. The Afghan response to this was the consolidation of her territories. The Novel shows that the primary reason of the Hazara Wars was the refusal of the Hazara to pay taxes to the Ameer because they considered themselves as free people. Another reason of the Hazara war, as portrayed in the Novel, was the strategic location of the Hazara hills. The Chief Secretary has argued the case of Kabul in consolidating the area in Afghanistan in his meeting with the Vizier of Hazara, Ghulam Hossain in the seventh chapter of the novel entitled “A diplomatist at work”.<sup>10</sup>

The Chief Secretary explains to the Vizier that the Amir wants to protect the area from the two lurking “Kafir nations” who ‘note every weak spot, every point of vantage’. As the Hazara hills are free, resembling an ‘empty natural fort’, it could ‘command other more fertile countries’ around it. Thus, if one of the Kafir nations managed to settle there, they would ultimately dislodge the Ameer too. The only way left for the Ameer is to incorporate the area in Afghanistan.

This incorporation took the form of the three Hazara Wars in 1888, 1892 and 1893 respectively. It is estimated that about half of the Hazara population was slaughtered or driven out of their territory.[15] The remaining were heavily taxed and mostly became slaves like Gul Begum. Such atrocities were committed that Gul Begum is forced to ask her fellow inmate in the Kabul slave market,

<sup>9</sup>New Historicism argues that all systems of thought, all phenomena, all institutions, all works of art, and all literary texts must be situated within a historical perspective. In other words, texts or phenomena cannot be somehow torn from history and analyzed in isolation, outside of the historical process. For further details please see [14]

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix 1 for the original text of the novel covering Chief Secretary’s argument with the Vizier.

“Was ever prisoner so bound? Was ever slave so punished?”[16]

The strategy of Abdur Rahman to crush the Hazara nurtured hatred among various groups. Spectre of deep religious and ethnic polarization in Afghanistan (Shia Vs Sunni, Pakhtuns Vs Hazaras) emerged during this period and is still hunting her. The policy of the political unification of Afghanistan was the need of the period in broader context but the manner in which it was carried out insure that Abdur Rahman failed to incorporate the various segment of Afghan society.

It seems little has changed for this beleaguered nation over the last century. The constant turmoil has persisted when one compare the present situation of Afghanistan with the state of affairs in Afghanistan under Abdur Rahman.

## 7 Fact in the Fiction Character of the Chief Secretary

The character of the Chief Secretary in the Novel is based on the personality of Sultan Muhammad Khan who remained the Chief Secretary of Amir Abdur Rahman. Sultan Muhammad Khan is the father of renowned Urdu poet, Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984).<sup>11</sup> Like the son, the father was too, extraordinary. He was born at the home of a landless peasant near Sialkot in the village of Kala Kader. He was a quick and intelligent boy at school. He passed his matriculation with distinction and learned Persian, and English at school and during his stay in Lahore for high education to go along his mother tongue Panjabi and Urdu. His command over so many languages along with his reputation as an intelligent and hard working person served him well. An Afghan official on visit to Lahore noticed his abilities and helped him in acquiring a position in Afghan court where he eventually rose to the position of personal interpreter and senior advisor to Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. He was one of the prominent Indian Muslim who served in Afghanistan. He served as interpreter and assistant when the Amir was negotiating the Durand Line agreement in 1893 with British India. He played a vital role in modernizing and systematizing the mode of governance in Afghanistan and wrote a book “The Constitution and laws of Afghanistan” in 1900. He also edited the official biography of the Amir “The life of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan” in two volumes printed in 1900.<sup>12</sup> Sultan Muhammad also served as Afghanistan’s Ambassador in England (1898-1905). Lillias Hamilton had friendly relation with him during her stay in Kabul as the court physician and played a key role in his escape from Kabul.

In the introduction of the Novel, Lady Hamilton says about the character of Chief Secretary, “I have tried to draw him as he was then”.[17]

Upon reading the manuscript of the Novel before publication, Sultan Muhammad Khan commented, “I think it is very like what I was.”[18]

The Novel depicts two phases of the life of Sultan Muhammad Khan. The first phase shows him as the self-satisfied Court favorite, flattered and sought after by everyone. While the second phase depicts him as the over worked official, intrigued against, bunted and accused of every conceivable and inconceivable crime.[19]

<sup>11</sup>Faiz was born of Sultan Fatima, the fifth wife of Sultan Muhammad Khan in 1911.

<sup>12</sup>These two volumes were reprinted by Oxford University Press Karachi in 1980.

Let us now see the various aspects of the character of Chief Secretary in the Novel. He introduces himself as the 'confidential advisor and secretary' of the Amir to the Hazara Vizier. The way he convinced the Hazara Vizier about the need of unifying the state of Afghanistan and amalgamating the Hazara hills in Afghanistan, shows that he knew his job well and was well aware of the situation in the region. It was due to his selfless devotion to his work that the Amir trusted him and gave him the charge of a number of offices. His work load is described by the writer in these words,

"He had not only the mere nominal superintendence of a dozen most diverse kinds of works, offices, etc., but was responsible for the working, and for the actual detail of each".[20]

He was in charge of the intelligence department and was well aware of the regional situation. When the Hazara Vizier, Ghulam Hussain visited Kabul to plea the cause of free and independent Hazara, the Chief Secretary tried to convince him by showing the bigger picture of regional politics, saying; the Amir "wishes to have his soldiers in your country to protect you from the two great kafir nations that are advancing step by step.... If, however, you were once incorporated with Afghanistan, the treaties that protect this country would also protect you".[21]

In his personal life, the writer describes him as 'a tall, silent man', 'a most religious person'[22] though having his 'good deal of superstitions'. Besides the compulsory five times a day prayers, he used to perform special mid-night prayers, especially in time of troubles. He was like 'a domesticated being'

"His home was his home; no other pleased him so well.... His walking stick was his stick, no other fitted so comfortably into his hand. So his wife had been his wife. Others might be more attractive, more capable, more highly educated, but no other women knew his ways so well, so no other could suit him so well". [23]

He is also shown as the one having a very ambitious nature and great 'curving for popularity and fame'. [24]

The death of his wife affected him the most. "The world seemed to have died to the Chief Secretary in her death, and he had no wish to live." [25]

The Amir had a special liking for his 'valuable official' not only because of his work but also for his company. Without him everything 'seemed dull and spiritless' to the Amir.[26] His status was no less than a vizier. He lived in a 'house that had been always occupied by the vizier', drew a very high salary along with many allowances and gifts from the Amir and princes. He was quite a satisfied husband and had never indulged in extramarital activities as were common in the harems of Kabul. After the death of his wife, he remained exclusive and turned down many proposals.[27] It was the sympathy of the Amir which welded Sultan Muhammad Khan to the royal court.

Once the Amir offered to find another wife for him, the Chief Secretary showed no interest and counter argued that "I have all I require. A wife would only take up my time, and I have none to spare from the Government service".[28]

His brother spent a summer with him. This is how his brother describes his innumerable duties

“Thirty guests, from how many different tribes? With all their petitions to attend to the Amir’s private as well as public correspondence, all the foreigners in the Government employ to look after, the many requisitions from the royal gun factory, the distillery, the tannery, and what not. You have the work of twenty men”.[29]

Sultan Muhammad Khan was also responsible for writing annual reports about the general condition of the country along with his own suggestions. He talked about his reports and suggestions regarding the improvements in the education sector, condition of prisoners, roads and reservoirs which he wrote every year but which were constantly neglected on the pretext of “the time has not yet come to do these things, that there are other matters to be attended to first”.[30]

He was advised by his brother to take a holiday and spend the winter at home in India but the Amir categorically rejected the proposal and sent the guest back in “haste and not too great courtesy”. Not only that, he also strictly prohibited Sultan Muhammad Khan from leaving Afghanistan.

The thoughts of Gul Begum about the character of Chief Secretary are quite revealing. She adores the sublime nature of Sultan Muhammad Khan. She regards her master as different from “any other man, given to pleasures and luxuries and money earning”. She admires him for his plan for the education and general amelioration of the condition of the people of this ‘poor, wretched country’. She regarded him as someone who “never think of himself, is always arranging and thinking of others, planning to get this man out of some difficulty, or that one some better post or pay; that he is, indeed, a living saint who has eschewed all earthly desires, and lives only for his God and to benefit the human race”.[31]

The second phase of Sultan Mohammad Khan life in the novel depicts him as “the overworked official, intrigued against, bunted and accused of every conceivable and inconceivable crime, by enemies too unscrupulous and too numerous not to be formidable”.[32]

As the work load was too much for him so the Chief Secretary engaged a Mirza, Clerk, to help him. This led to certain very important state secrets leaking out to the masses which irked the Amir.

Sultan Muhammad Khan’s speech on the occasion of self-defense in the forged letter plot against him at court reveals his services to the king and his honest nature. He said, “from my first entrance into your court I have loved you . . . Twice I have saved you from danger, perhaps from death. Ill-health and over work have combined to alter me so that I hardly know myself. I am listless and dull, unnerved. Your majesty has not understood my depression. I have shunned my friends. . . But God is my witness that never have I toiled more arduously in your service, never since I have been in this country have I more right to appeal to you for protection against my enemies”.[33]

Despite his best performance, things were getting out of hand. His situation can be judged from the warning by Gul Begum: “for some time pass I have been hearing rumors, Agha, rumors of your being out of favor, of another being given your post, of possible imprisonment, perhaps worse than that even, God knows”. [34]

She further said, “. . .you have yourself often told me that the head of the police is one of your worst enemies”. This head of the police was bribed by Mohammad Jan, Gul’s supposed husband, and was adamant on proving Sultan a traitor.

“This is the country of death and destruction, of intrigue and secret assassination, Why not fly” suggested Gul begum to the Chief Secretary.

It was then that Sultan Muhammad Khan realized the gravity of the situation. He recognized that he was indeed lost. He blames all this on Gul Begum, calling her ‘black-faced’ (in Pashto ‘tor-makhi’) whose misfortune have brought ruin to the Chief Secretary since day one.

The lurking danger of intrigue took the form of a forged letter believed to be on its way to India and recovered by a spy. The Chief Secretary saved his skin only just by producing the original sealed letter before the Amir. This incident finally convinced him of leaving the country which he had so much loved. The writer portrays his thoughts about the Amir in the following words.

“His master, who had practically brought him up, aroused in him an enthusiasm for a country in whose welfare he had ever since been so interested, where his ambitions had been satisfied, his love of power gratified. Never would he see his master or that country more. Then there were the schools he himself had suggested and design. There were the factories he had established, the workmen he had trained...”. [35]

The escape plan was hatched by Gul Begum that very night. The Chief Secretary used to spend a night or two at Zearats every now and then when he required mental peace. It was decided that Gul Begum, disguised as male servant, will accompany him and that instead of going to Zearat, they will fly towards the Hazara hills and then onward to British India. The Chief Secretary agreed and they managed to reach very close to the boarder where in an encounter with the chasing Muhammad Jan, Gul Begum died and Sultan Muhammad Khan safely reached British India.

## 8 Conclusion

Tragedy is written large over the whole Novel. Lillias has constructed characters from real life. She has vividly depicted the character of Chief Secretary, Sultan Muhammad Khan, as a well-wisher of Afghanistan. He is shown as a loyal servant to the Amir. It was due to his loyalty that he was given the rank of Chief Secretary. This novel gives a clear picture of Sultan Muhammad Khan’s sacrifices for the development of Afghanistan. His services for keeping the country protected from breaking and being attacked are also highlighted. As a person, Sultan Muhammad Khan emerges as a talented and hardworking individual with passion for his work and sincere devotion for the welfare of Afghanistan. He is a devoted Muslim with his little idiosyncrasies and superstitions.

“A Vizier’s Daughter- A Tale of the Hazara War” is a unique source of imagining and understanding life in Afghanistan in general and Kabul in particular in mid 1890s from the perspective of an English doctor and writer, Lillias Anna Hamilton. With sharp observation and imaginative recreation of life, she has delineated details related to her life in Afghanistan, in fascinating language into a historical novel.

## References

- [1] Lillias, Hamilton. A Vizier’s Daughter. London: John Murray Albemarle Street, 1900.

P-3

- [2] Edward Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 2003. P-3.
- [3] Retrieved from <http://www.ayrshirehistory.org.uk/Bibliography/pdfs/AN39-online.pdf> on /12/2015
- [4] Sarfraz khan, and NoorulAmin. "Mir MunshiAala Sultan Muhammad Khan and his services to Afghanistan." *Bi-annual Research Journal, Central Asia*, issue no. 72, (2013), ASC, university of Peshawar. P 23
- [5] Dr. John Alfred Gray. *My Residence at the Court of the Ameer* (1895)
- [6] Sarfraz khan, ——— P 24
- [7] Retrieved from [www.aanhs.org.uk](http://www.aanhs.org.uk) on 10/12/2015
- [8] Lee, J, Abd al-Rahman Khan and the MarazUl-Mulk. Cambridge University press, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Briton and Ireland 1991, P 208
- [9] Lillias, Hamilton, P 5
- [10] Fowler, Corinne. (2007). *Chasing tales: Travel Writing, Journalism and the History of British Ideas about Afghanistan*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V. P-4
- [11] Lillias, Hamilton, P 17
- [12] Ibid, P 6
- [13] Ibid, P 159
- [14] Habib, M.A.R., *A History of Literary Criticism: from Plato to present*. 2005. Blackwell Publishing, Malden USA. P-760
- [15] Alessandro Monsutti (March 20, 2012). "HAZĀRA ii. HISTORY". *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Retrieved December 30, 2016 from <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hazara-2>
- [16] Lillias, Hamilton, P 75
- [17] Lillias, Hamilton, P3
- [18] Ibid, P 3
- [19] Ibid
- [20] Ibid, P 4
- [21] Ibid, P 35
- [22] Ibid, P 144
- [23] Ibid, P 146

- [24] Ibid, P 176
- [25] Ibid, P 147
- [26] Ibid, P 150
- [27] Ibid, P 156
- [28] Ibid, P 154
- [29] Ibid, P 154
- [30] Ibid, P 155
- [31] Ibid, P 176
- [32] Ibid, P 3
- [33] Ibid, P 192
- [34] Ibid, P 180
- [35] Ibid, P 198

## Appendix

Original text from “A Vizier’s Daughter; A Tale of the Hazara War” page 31 to 35.

“What is your rank, sir, and to whom have I the honour of speaking?” Ghulam Hossain inquired as soon as the door was closed.

“My name is Ali Mohamed Khan, and I am the Ameer’s confidential adviser and secretary,” the other replied. “I am commissioned to ask you why you solicited a private interview with the Ameer. Such private audiences are seldom granted to strangers, but if you and I come to such a settlement as would make such an interview desirable, His Majesty will doubtless grant you one, but he must know what your views and objects are, before such a thing can be even contemplated. The Afghan people are very suspicious, and if the thought that the Ameer was entering into private arrangements with the chiefs of alien tribes, they would suspect treachery, and he would have trouble with them.”

Ghulam Hossain understood and was satisfied, but found it far from easy, under these rather unexpected circumstances, to open out his plans, and explain his views. He did so, however, eventually, but afterwards he did not feel satisfied with himself and what he had said.

He felt he had put his case badly, had not shown himself off to advantage before this tall, silent man. He could not have put his finger upon the weak spot in his argument, but he felt that there was a weak spot somewhere. Or was the whole thing weak? It had been very difficult to put it all satisfactorily, for he had met

with but slight response and very little encouragement from the secretary; who kept on writing at intervals – making notes, the Hazara envoy thought, for he seldom put down more than two or three words at a time.

“Is that all?” he said, when Ghulam Hossain had finished.

“Yes, that is all I have to say,” the envoy replied, “unless you can suggest some other way out of the difficulty; my people are open to reason. What do you think the Ameer will say to my proposals?”

The secretary smiled. “It is not for me to say,” he said. “You have had no dealing with the Ameer or you would understand that it is impossible to guess even, how things may strike him.”

“But you must be able to form some opinion – you who are with him constantly, and carry on his correspondence. You must know so much of his dealings with foreign powers.” The envoy went on eagerly.

“With foreign powers, yes,” the secretary replied, placing particular emphasis on the word “powers.”

“What you mean is that I am not the representative of a foreign power, but only of a nation, which has established and maintained its independence when it ought never to have been free, but should have owned allegiance to the rulers of Kabul these hundreds of years back?” the Hazara envoy said, reddening.

“I did not say so.”

“No, but you implied it.”

“What do you think the Ameer implied in his interview with you today?”

Ghulam Hossain’s heart stood still, he saw it all plainly enough now. It had not struck him in that way before, and he suddenly felt his cause was hopeless.

The secretary, who, though writing, never took his eyes for long off his visitor, saw and noted all that was going on in his mind; he had something to suggest, and was only waiting his opportunity.

“You asked me if I saw any way out of this difficulty a few minutes ago. There is, of course, a very easy way.”

Ghulam Hossain looked up, a ray of hope lightning his face. But the light soon faded. “Persuade your people that it is to their advantage to pay these taxes; you have no roads throughout your whole country, you have mere sheep tracks along which your altogether insignificant trade is carried on. You have no army, no guns, no money, to protect yourselves from foreign invaders. The Ameer wishes to see you strong, he wishes you to have an army, he will give you guns and possibly money, to make whatever is necessary for your protection.”

“Perhaps we have no roads,” the envoy said, “but if we required them we could make them, we have men enough and to spare. And what do you mean by our having no army? Why, in my country every man is a soldier. Of course, what you say about the arms is true, I feel that, and also that we have but little money

wherewith to procure them, but why should any great power such as your master covet our barren hills?"

The secretary smiled. "The Ameer does not covet them," he said, "he does not wish to interfere with you in any way, but he wishes to have his soldiers in your country to protect you from the two great Kafir nations that are advancing step by step, and closing in inch by inch around his country; he cannot afford to leave you unprotected, because once let either of those two nations in among your hills, and he will never be able to dislodge them – on the contrary, they would be able to dislodge him, so they must never get there. There are two empty natural forts that practically command the whole of Afghanistan – I say empty, because when men know nothing of warfare, and have no army or ammunition, they are but little better than women, when it comes to war. Of these two your country is one, but there is another, with which, however, we have nothing to do just now. If these were likely to remain empty, well and good, you might each keep your hills, we do not want them. But this is not likely. These two Kafir powers I mentioned, note every weak spot, every point of vantage, in these parts; they have, without doubt, noted you for conquest, not because they want your hills, rocks, stones, and pasture land, but because yours is a country which commands other more fertile countries, and because a few regiments quartered there could do much to stop an army marching from the north or south, as the case might be. The Ameer has trade treaties with these Kafir nations; it would be difficult for them to make war with him, for reasons which I am not at liberty to disclose, and with which, of course, you have nothing to do; but you have no such treaty with either; as long as you call yourselves free, there is nothing to prevent them walking into your country, and incorporating it with their own. If, however, you were once incorporated with Afghanistan, the treaties that protect this country would also protect you, because you would be included in them."

"Then what need of the taxes for the country and the roads," inquired Ghulam Hossain, "if the fact that our country being allied with your means protection from outside enemies?"

"It means that for you to be recognised as Afghan subjects you must conform to Afghan laws, and be placed on the same footing as the other Afghan tribesmen, none of whom are exempt from taxation. Listen," he said more softly, "I am disposed to be your friend; truth to tell, my sympathies are to a certain extent with you. There is no use your attempting to resist. If you agree to the Ameer's terms now he will make easy ones. If you resist, it will be a case of fire and sword, extermination and slavery. You do not know the man you have to deal with. Go home now and come to me in two days, and let me know what course you have decided on. Believe me, there are but two alternatives. Peace with taxation, or war which will make the few survivors fugitives or slaves. You will find me here at this time the day after tomorrow, unless you hear from my servant to the contrary. Good bye; I have other work to which I must now devote myself." He placed his right hand on his heart and bowed, and his visitor had no choice but to retire.