

THE LIFE
OF
HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
KING EDWARD VII.

NOVEMBER 9TH. 1841 — MAY 6TH. 1910

BY
J. PENDEREL BRODHURST
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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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Parsees expose their dead until they fall to pieces or are eaten by the vultures, as well as the burning grounds where dead Hindoos are cremated. He also went to see the first Sir Jamestjee Jejeebhoy at Mazagon Castle, and presented him with a gold medal and a copy of Flaxman's "Compositions." He also called on Lady Sassoon and Agha Khan, who claimed descent from the Old Man of the Mountains. In fact, all the sights and most of the interesting people of Bombay had their turn. The presents—there were more than 400 of them—from the Bombay Rajahs and Chiefs, were sent on board the *Serapis* before the party went up country. They included examples of every variety of English workmanship—tissues, brocades, cloths, jewellery, gold, silver, and gems of all kinds. In addition to his present, the Rajah of Kolhapoor set aside a sum of £20,000 to found a "Prince of Wales Hospital." We are told that:—

"The presents of the Nizam, rich in swords, fire-arms, carpets, gold cloth, and the like, were especially interesting. The Gaekwar of Baroda offered a tea-service of silver, of native workmanship and design, made at Madras under European superintendence; shields of layers of silk, closely pressed together, which resist a sword-cut or the thrust of a lance from the strongest arm; a pearl necklace from the Maharanee, a very beautiful ornament which had graced the necks of ladies of the Gaekwar's family, the pearls of excellent colour and size, with an emerald and diamond pendant, for the acceptance of the Princess of Wales. A diamond brooch with pearl pendants was also presented to Her Royal Highness by the Maharanee. The Rao of Cutch sent an exquisite collection of the famous work of his State, which has a deserved reputation in India. Upwards of thirty pieces of silver and gold, flower-vases, tea-services, varieties of articles for the table, formed a very sufficient illustration of the excellence of the workmanship and of the taste of the workmen."

The night before the departure for Baroda was spent on board the *Serapis*, and the Gaekwar's capital was reached soon after seven o'clock on the morning of November 19th. His Highness, with a brilliant group of officers and sirdars, was in waiting on the platform. Mr. Wheeler is very picturesque on this occasion, and I may fairly quote one of his "purple patches" following upon his account of how the Gaekwar had come down to the station seated upon a splendid elephant:—

"But if the golden-garbed elephants and the multiform pattern and colour of the native costumes were novel and beautiful, there was one object standing there,—where plumes and banners were waving, and drums were beating—awaiting the Prince of Wales, who in interest surpassed them all. This was the child who, in a flash of time, has been raised from a beggar to be sovereign over 2,600,000 people, and monarch of a territory so fertile that it is called the garden of Gujerat, and Gujerat is the garden of India. There, standing beside his sage prime minister, is the tiny Prince, with hands so diminutive that they can scarcely encircle the handle of the jewelled sword, and with a dress flashing with a plenitude of diamonds. Whether the little fellow felt that the visit of this guest would tend to establish him more than anything else in his government, or

whether, during His Highness's stay in Bombay, he had learned to like the Prince of Wales, I cannot say; but his impetuosity to greet the Royal visitor while the carriages were being brought to a standstill was most manifest, and was as pleasant a sight to the eyes as it was novel, coming from one of a race who are usually most sombre and dignified at State interviews. His Highness bowed low several times, covering up his handsome face with his hands in front of the Royal carriage; and when the Prince of Wales stepped down to the crimson and gold carpet, the Gaekwar put out his right hand, and in a gladsome, child-like way led him to a seat. A conversation, lasting some minutes, passed between the Prince and the Gaekwar (Sir Madhav Rao translating). Then the



THE KING PRESENTING NEW COLOURS TO THE BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY.

Gaekwar, rising, conducted him to the edge of the carpeting outside the walls of the station, and then, having pointed to the magnificent stud of elephants which were to take the suite to the Residency, took his seat beside His Royal Highness in the howdah of the biggest animal there."

Most magnificent creatures were these elephants. That upon which the Prince and the Gaekwar rode was of extraordinary size, and here Dr. Russell takes up the tale:—"On his back was a howdah of surpassing splendour, which shone like burnished gold in the morning sun, and which was either made of gold or of silver gilt. It was covered with a golden canopy. This exquisitely finished carriage, reported to have cost four lakhs of rupees, was placed on cloth of gold and velvet cushions, fastened over the embroidered covering that almost concealed the outline of the great elephant, which stood swaying his painted

proboscis to and fro as if he kept time to the music of the bands outside. His head was coloured of a bright saffron, and on this ground were traced quaint scrolls. His proboscis was especially ornamented in different coloured patterns, and his ears were stained of a pale yellowish-green. His tusks had been sawn off to the length of three feet, and false tusks of greater diameter, also shortened, were wedged over them by bands of gold. His painted legs were encased in thick round coils of gold. The mahout was attired in a costume befitting such a gorgeous charge. Attendants stood by with State umbrellas, fans of peacocks' feathers, yaks' tails, and streamers of scarlet and cloth of gold, which they waved before the Prince; others held the silver ladder for him to ascend to the howdah. After a short pause to survey the scene, the Prince and the Gaekwar descended the steps. The beast in golden raiment, in a succession of convulsive heaves and jerks, dropped down upon what the elephants rest upon. The ladder was placed against the howdah, and the Prince, carefully helped, stepped up; the Gaekwar followed and sat by his side. Sir Madhava Rao, in small white turban and purple velvet robe, took his place. At the word to rise, the mountainous creature swayed to and fro, and the Prince held on strenuously to the rail in front while the animal was establishing itself on its fore-legs."

The elephants in front of the Prince knelt down and salaamed as he passed. The whole of the three miles' journey to the Residency was bordered by a light trellis-work of bamboos and palm strips, hung with lamps and festooned with bright green leaves and flowers, and at intervals there were arches and clusters of banners. There was a durbar as soon as the Prince reached the Residency, to which the Gaekwar accompanied him, and in the afternoon he went through the curious and interesting streets to pay a return visit to His Highness. Before he left the Maharajah hung a wreath of flowers round his neck.

From the Palace the party drove to the enclosure used for combats between wild beasts, where they had—I will not say enjoyed—some remarkable experiences. First they witnessed that dreariest of all spectacles, a series of wrestling matches, and then two elephants were unloosed in the ring. They showed very little inclination to fight until they had been irritated by shouts and lance-pricks, and when at last the two trunks got tied into a knot, squibs were let off under them, and they bolted. In a second round one of them was butted so heavily that he fled. Then a mounted sowar came into the ring and annoyed a third elephant into making many rushes at him, from which the lithe horseman and his active steed always escaped. A rhinoceros fight is described in a very amusing way by Sir W. H. Russell:—

"The bar across the end gateway was now lowered, and half a dozen men came in, tugging at a rhinoceros. He had heavy chains on his legs, and was 'roped' before and behind—a captive behemoth. However, this was all 'make-believe,' for when the ropes were slipped off, the unwieldy thing toddled about, grunting like a pig, and looked as if he wished to follow his keepers. Presently another rhinoceros was introduced to his fellow. Two merchants could not be more amiable on first introduction on 'Change. They came nose to nose, as if

to exchange civilities, but the attendants began to excite ill-feelings by poking and patting them alternately, and by horrid yells, and one rhinoceros—lowering his head till his chin, or lower jaw, rested on the sand—made a thrust with his snout at his friend. The blow was hard, as the noise it made testified, but it was delivered on an adamant front. It was at once returned—the crowd were delighted. There were quick encounters, blow for blow, till it occurred suddenly to the first rhinoceros that it was nonsense to get heated and worried all for nothing, so he turned round and made off as hard as he could lumber towards the gateway. But the bar was down; his backers and friends reproached him for his want of spirit; he was again goaded up to his antagonist, who was standing as though he too were wondering what it all meant, when he received a treacherous dig in the side, which made him quiver from stem to stern. Then he turned, and the brutes, with levelled rams, had a keen bout, in which they were deluged with cold water, to keep up their courage, by the attendants, till the former runaway performed his retrograde movement again, to the amusement of the audience, nor could he be induced by threats, abuse, flattering fondlings, and abundance of cold water to renew the fight. It was evidently a relief to the less cowardly when his antagonist ran off, and he did not show any inclination for pursuit. *Exeunt* two degraded rhinoceroses, for neither could be described as ‘game’ or heroic!”

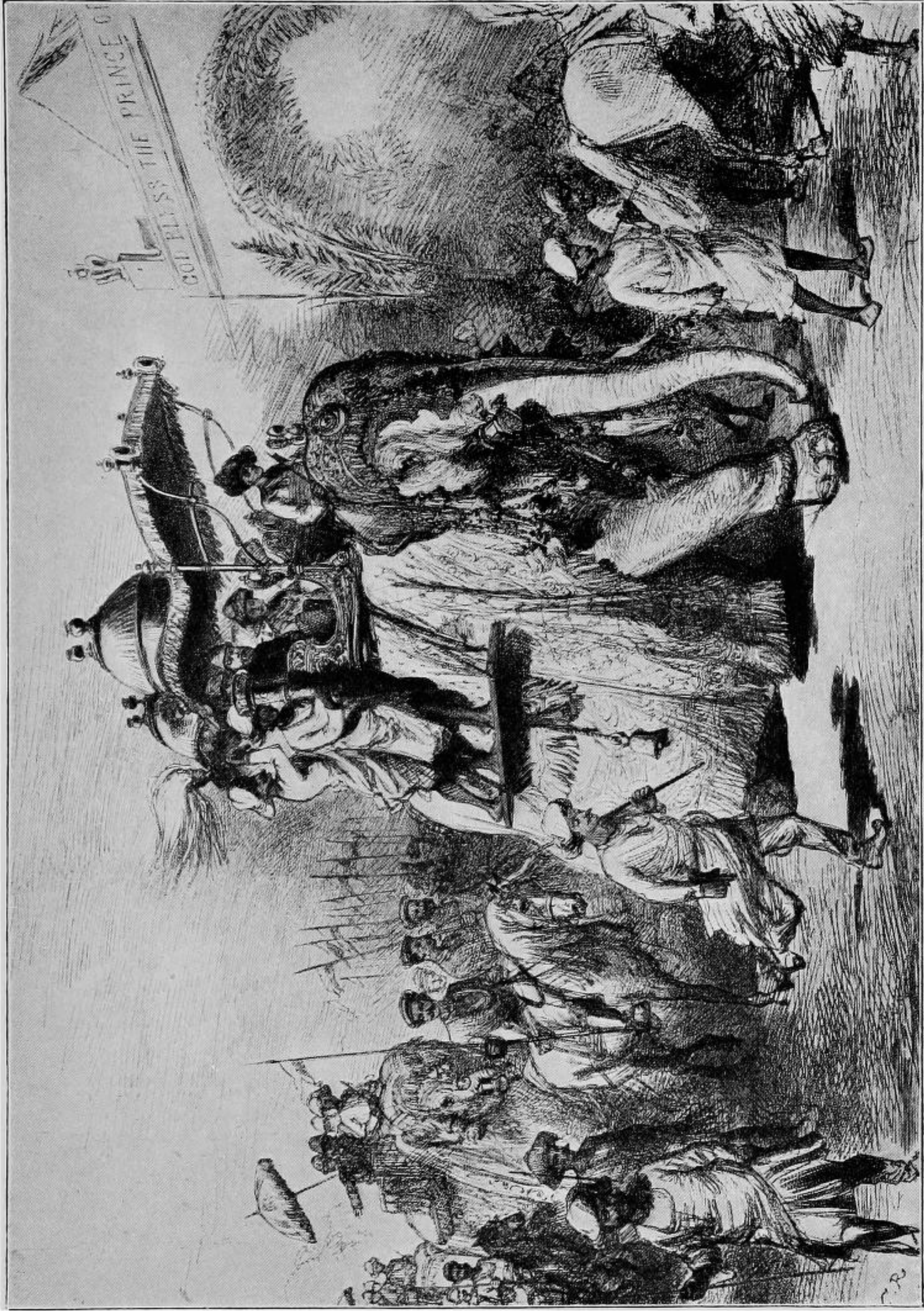
The buffaloes and rams which followed fought well. The two buffaloes were, however, not equally matched in strength, and the smaller one was gradually beaten, but even when he was butted right over he got up and renewed the conflict, until he had to retire with a broken horn. The rams charged each other furiously, and the shock with which their hard heads came together was very loud indeed. The fighting was followed by a kind of parade of the Gaekwar’s menagerie. The most interesting object was a royal Bengal tiger, carefully bound with ropes, held at arms’ length by ten men on each side. Fiery eyed and savage, the beast growled ominously, and one of its custodians had a narrow escape of being laid hold of. The Prince of Wales was interested if not edified by what he saw, and having thanked the Gaekwar he went off to dine with the officers of the 9th Native Infantry. The next morning everybody was up before it was light, a day’s cheetah hunting in the Gaekwar’s preserves at Dekha, ten miles away, being in prospect. This was the Prince’s first day’s sport in India, and he wore a sun-hat, a light grey lounge coat, white trousers, and yellow riding boots. A special train ran to the hunting grounds, and there, in the midst of lancers and other guards, elephants, camels, and draught oxen, were found five or six cheetahs in carts, fierce-looking dogs, half greyhound, half deerhound, and eight falconers with peregrines and other falcons on their wrists. The cheetah, it may be explained, is a leopard, and the Gaekwar had a pack of them trained to hunt the antelope. The Prince mounted a bullock-cart with the Duke of Sutherland, and presently a cheetah was slipped at a herd of black buck, but nothing came of it. The next attempt was more successful, and the Prince pulled down a buck, which was despatched by a shikaree. During the hottest part of the day the

sportsmen rested and lunched at a shooting-lodge bearing the pleasing name of the Place of Alligators, and afterwards the Prince shot a fine buck. He drove back to Baroda towards evening, and dined with the officers of the 22nd Native Infantry.

On Sunday, November 21st, everybody rested and attended service in the Residency. In the evening the Prince dined with the Gaekwar at the Palace of the Mohtee Bagh, which, at that time at all events, was filled with mechanical clocks, speaking birds, antique armour, and old china. In the courtyard of the Palace the guests saw the gold and silver guns, by which great store was set. These three-pounder cannon are four in number, two of gold and two of silver, but it is not clear that the former are not silver-gilt. "The carriages are drawn by white bullocks caparisoned in cloth of gold and gilt trappings, and their horns are gilt. The limbers are covered with plates of silver, and the tumbrils and caissons are plated with the same metal and gilt." The gunners wore fantastic uniforms.

Of the dinner itself it suffices to say that the guests were not regaled with the somewhat fearsome delicacies of the Baroda *cuisine*. At the close of the feast the Prime Minister, Sir Madhav Rao, brought in the Gaekwar and placed him by the Prince's side—caste forbade him to eat with his guest. Sir Madhav then proposed the health of the Queen, and afterwards that of the Prince, who made a speech, cordial in its thanks and very complimentary to the young Maharaja, for whom, under the able counsels of Sir Madhav, he predicted a great career. Sir Madhav replied to the toast of the Maharaja and the Maharanee, the widow of the deposed Maharaja's brother, in a speech of Oriental gorgeousness of style. Long had they been gazing on the photographs of English Royalty! Now was the happiest moment of their lives, for it was their felicity to see that Prince who was Heir to a Sceptre, whose beneficent power and influence were felt in every quarter of the globe; which dispelled darkness, diffused light, paralysed the tyrant's hand, shivered the manacles of the slave, extended the bounds of freedom, accelerated the happiness and elevated the dignity of the human race. The Prince had come from his distant northern home as the gracious messenger of a gracious Queen, to inspect an Empire founded by the heroism of Englishmen, and he would be greeted everywhere with fervent loyalty on account of his illustrious mother, his own exalted position, the motives which prompted his visit, and his own Royal affability and graciousness. But we need float no further on the gilded flood of Indian oratory; the land of the rising sun is ever the home of flamboyant speech, and if Sir Madhav "let himself go" for the occasion, his sincerity was as unquestionable as the fervour of his imagination.

The speeches over, the Prince and his suite were conducted to the Palace, where they were entertained with music and dancing, and the inevitable display of fireworks. After an interchange of gracious courtesies between the Prince and his hosts, departure was taken by train to the shooting-ground near Mehmoodabad, where the arrangements were in the hands of Mr. Shepherd, a



THE KING'S ENTRY INTO BARODA.

noted shot. Sir W. H. Russell records with gusto the number of quails slaughtered, and how in the second day's sport the Prince, towards whom the boars preserved an attitude of disloyal aloofness, at length succeeded in "getting his spear." On November 24th, the Royal party returned by special train to Bombay, and, owing to the prevalence of sickness in the city, boarded the *Serapis*, and decided on a visit to Goa.

The departure of the fleet took place on the 25th, the Prince landing in the harbour to take leave of the Governor. The ceremony was one of state, and I need not linger over the details. It should, however, be mentioned that the Prince broke through the conventional arrangements by visiting Sir Munguldass Nuthoobhoy, and participating in a wedding festivity in the house of that notable. Few Europeans have seen a native home at such a time; and the reader will readily imagine the excited interest of the bridegroom, the bride, and her attendant ladies in the coming of the Prince, since for a native wedding to be honoured with the presence of other than Indian royalty was an unprecedented event. The guests made a brilliant display in their many-coloured and jewel-bedizened garments, and the bridegroom, in brocade of gold and silver, and a tiara of jewels, was a magnificent spectacle. The house was crowded with Bombay merchants, whose wealth was fabulous, and with ladies of rank and beauty. A profusion of flowers, with which to garland the company, is ever a feature of a Bombay wedding, at least among the richer classes, and on going away the Prince was festooned with the rest, submitting himself to this part of the ceremony with his usual *bonhomie*. Before returning to the *Serapis*, he knighted Mr. Souter, the chief of the Bombay police, and the actual departure from the landing-stage was made in the presence of a great company of notables and the chief members of the European community. The Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, and his suite, paid a formal visit of farewell on the *Serapis* in the evening, and at sunset the little squadron began its cruise down the coast southward to Goa.