

THE RULER OF BARODA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND
WORK OF THE MAHARAJA GAEKWAR

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Indian tutors, and in the company of his younger brother Sampatrao and his cousin Dadasaheb Gaekwar, unlikely to produce the desired result. He urged on the Bombay Government the desirability of establishing a "Raja's school," open to the sons of nobles and officials, who should be of approximately equal age to the young Prince, and that neither in school nor in playground should there be any distinction made between him and the other boys. The school should have "a qualified English gentleman" as principal, who should also act as his companion as much as possible out of school-hours.

For the present there was no change, except that lessons in Marathi were supplemented by lessons in Gujarati, the language of the bulk of the Baroda people, and Urdu, that of the Mohammedan subjects.

The first break in the course of studies was occasioned by the visit to India of the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII., in November, 1875. It was thought fitting that the boy who was to be the ruler of Baroda should have the opportunity of meeting the heir to the Imperial throne. Accordingly, in the company of the Maharani Jamnabai, Sir Richard Meade, and a large suite, the young Maharaja went to Bombay on October 25th, being officially received at the station, and conducted to the bungalow at Lall Bag, which had been taken and fitted up for him by the authorities. His first duty in Bombay was the exchange of visits with the Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, after which he was at leisure to see, for the first time in his life, the sights of Bombay.

There already, at the end of October, about forty Indian Princes and chiefs gathered together to await the Prince of Wales's arrival. The display made by Baroda was as imposing as any of the others. A portion of the State Army, to the number of 1,500, had come to Bombay, including Malharrao's favourite regiment, the Gaekwar's, or Baroda, Highlanders,* and the gold and silver guns. The latter were mounted in front of the bungalow at Lall Bag, and excited much wonder.

The Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, arrived in Bombay on November 2nd, all the Princes being at the station to meet him. The exchange of ceremonial calls followed. The Prince of Wales reached Bombay Harbour in the *Serapis* six days later, the Viceroy going on board to conduct him ashore, while the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, a great assembly of European officials and others, and the Indian Princes and chiefs, now increased in number to seventy, awaited his landing. A reception was held at Government House on November 9th, where the Prince spoke to the boy Maharaja, telling him, it is recorded, that he should watch his career with interest, and urging him to continue his studies in English and horsemanship. Next day the Prince called at Lall Bag, and presented the Maharaja with a whip, a sword, a jewelled snuffbox, a ring, and two albums. On the 12th he inspected the Baroda troops, and expressed his admiration for the gold and silver guns.

* Malharrao's army in 1874 had cost him R 3,800,000, and these Highlanders, in full Highland costume, with pink tights to conceal the colour of their knees, were his great pride.

developing the resources of his country—a prophecy which has singularly been fulfilled. He proposed the toast of the Maharaja and the Maharani, Sir T. Madhavrao responding on their behalf, and the evening closed with music and fireworks.

This was the first entertainment of its kind in which His Highness had taken part, and, as may be seen, his youth and lack of experience of European ways did not allow him to play a very prominent part. But the visit of the Prince of Wales was certainly an important incident in his training. The remainder of the Prince's stay in Baroda was given up chiefly to sport, including pig-sticking at Dabka, Maharaja Khanderao's hunting-box eighteen miles west of Baroda City. On the evening of November 23rd he left Baroda, being escorted to the station by the Maharaja and the Dewan.

It has been mentioned that the new Agent to the Governor-General, during the Prince of Wales's visit to Baroda, was Mr. P. S. Melville, who had sat on the Commission to enquire into the subject of Maharaja Malharrao's guilt. To Melville fell the duty of carrying out his predecessor's suggestions as to a change in the young Maharaja's regimen, which the Bombay Government had sanctioned.

The most important point was the selection of an English tutor. Melville sought the advice of H. M. Birdwood, District Judge at Ratnagiri. Judge Birdwood recommended F. A. H. Elliot, son of a former Acting-Governor of Madras, and himself an Indian Civil Servant, who, when Assistant-Collector at Ragnagiri, had married the