

Illustrated Interviews.

XXXVI.—SCINDIA, MAHARAJAH OF GWALIOR.

By RAYMOND BLATHWAYT.



CENTRAL INDIA HORSE.
Photo. by Johnstone & Hoffman.

sound of coolness and refreshment; a little green lizard ran about the drawing-room wall; outside there was deep stillness, broken only at regular intervals by the bell-like, monotonous note of the "coppersmith" bird. Suddenly a wail of sobbing wind, forcibly recalling to me the sound I have so often heard in a little English church upon the top of some lonely, wind-



WAS seated in a darkened room in the Residency at Gwalior, talking to my host, Col. Donald Robertson, to whom, as in the past to his predecessors, Sir Lepel Griffin and Colonel Barr, so much of the prosperity of the vast native state of Gwalior is due. It was a day of blazing heat; the hot wind blew fitfully against the damp tatties, on which now and again the native servant threw buckets of water, which splashed upon the ground with a delicious

swept hill, rushed through the silent house; doors slammed, voices were heard once more, and in another moment the stately "bearer" entered the room, announcing "Maharajah Sahib," who, indeed, followed close upon the servant's heels.

Scindia, Maharajah of Gwalior, one of the most powerful princes in India, is a rather tall, stout, broad-shouldered, well-built young fellow of about eighteen years of age. He is very dark, with handsome black eyes full of a certain merry intelligence that invariably wins him friends wherever he goes. Though an exceedingly gentle-mannered person, he is possessed of any amount of determination and resolution, which, indeed, require the utmost control lest they should degenerate into mere obstinacy and self-will. Fortunately for him and the nation over which he rules, such a tendency is balanced by so keen a sense of humour and such real goodness of heart that it is impossible to conceive of his

doing anything unjust, unkind, or that would place him in a ridiculous position.

"Colonel Robertson," said he, after my presentation to him, "will you come down to the Palace with me, as I want to show you some photographs I have just taken; and won't Mrs. Robertson and Mr. Blathwayt come, too?" he continued, as he asked our hostess permission to smoke a cigarette.

We were only too pleased to exchange the dull quietude of the long Indian day for something



SCINDIA, MAHARAJAH OF GWALIOR.
From a Photograph by Johnstone & Hoffman.



From a Photo. by] PRINCIPAL GATE OF THE FORTRESS OF GWALIOR.—SHOWING THE CEREMONY OF HANDING OVER THE KEYS TO THE MAHARAJAH IN 1885.

[Mr. Lake.

that promised us a little change and action, and so, stepping into the Prince's carriage, we all drove off. A curious scene it was that met our eyes: the flat, low-lying country across which the long shadows were lazily stretching themselves beneath the rays of the declining sun; the Residency itself, a picturesque building of the regular bungalow type, hidden away in a group of trees, above which one caught a glimpse of the British flag flying in the breeze, with a native sentry marching up and down the gravelled terrace; and then, outside the Residency gardens, the deserted streets of Merar, once occupied by our British troops, and now left to silence and decay. And three miles away stands, frowning down upon the surrounding country, the fortress of Gwalior itself, which, in 1885, as is shown in the appended picture, we restored to its rightful owner, the father of the present ruler.

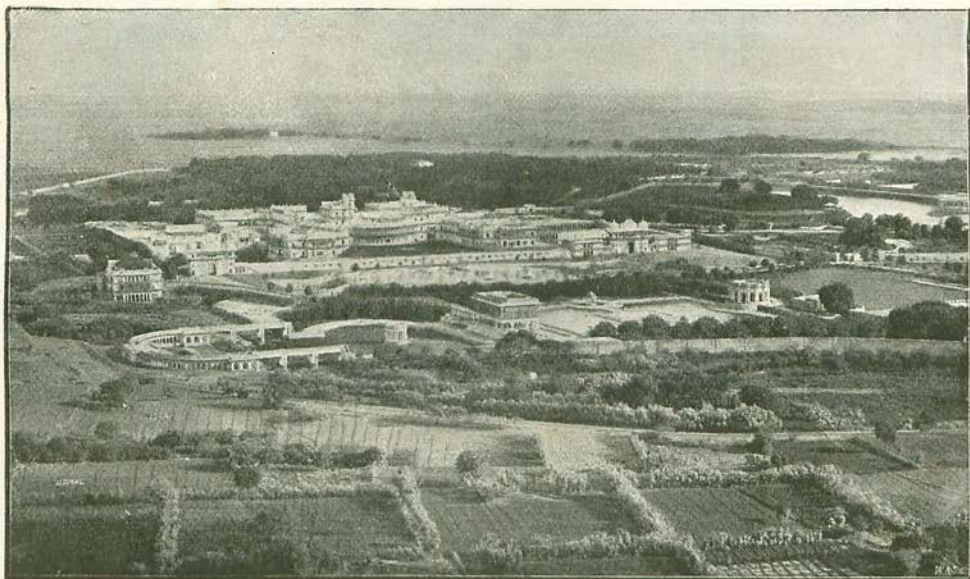
The rock upon which the fortress stands rises abruptly from the plain to a height of 300ft., scarped and almost impregnable, except in two villages on the western face, which has been of late years strongly fortified. The rock itself is thus the fortress, the abrupt scarps of which form its best wall of defence. A wonderfully impressive and interesting spectacle it presents, thus suddenly rearing itself upon the vision of the stranger, and none the less interesting that it was a seat of



From a Photo. by]

SAS BHAIO—BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.



From a Photo. by]

MOTI MAHL—OR PALACE OF THE ZENANA.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.

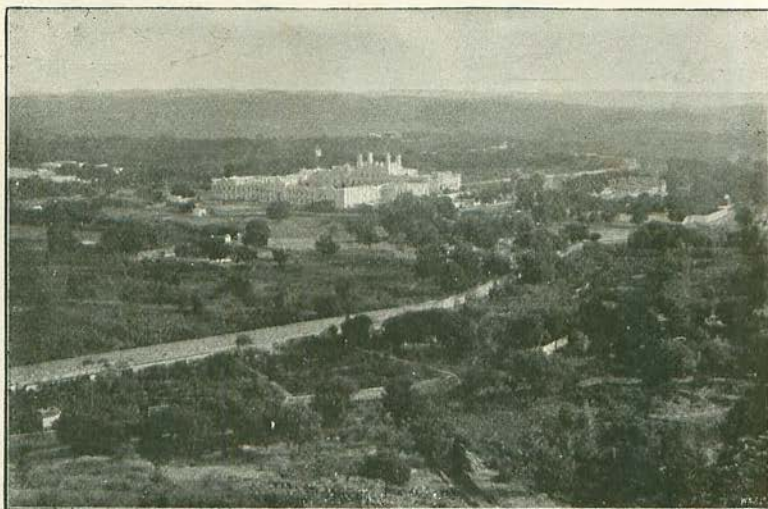
monarchy and the stage whereon many a strange tragedy has been enacted for centuries before the Christian era. It is about two miles in length, and some hundreds of yards in width. Perched high upon its summit stand the beautiful Buddhist temples of Sas Bhao and the Teli Mandir, one of which is certainly not less than three thousand years old.

Buildings wrought in dead days for men a long time dead.

The entrance to the fort, through which I passed the following day seated upon an elephant, and with a small escort of native police, is hewn out of the gigantic walls, which are still decorated with beautiful encaustic tiles, and within which is situated the great Palace of Raja Man Singh, of great antiquity, and which is considered to be one of the finest pieces of architecture in Northern India. All this I gathered from the Prince himself and Colonel Robertson, as the carriage rolled smoothly along the well-pre-

served high road, sun-flecked, shadow-stricken, across which perpetually darted the little striped squirrels which are so distinctive a feature of Indian life, and along which groups of brilliantly costumed, stately, and salaaming natives were seated or walking.

Round the north-east base of the rock lies the ancient city of Gwalior, now almost deserted: upon the other side are stretched the wide parks and pleasure grounds in which stand the Maharajah's magnificent palaces, the Jai Bilas and the Moti Mahl—or Palace of the Zenana. And very beautiful they looked as they gleamed snow-white



From a Photo. by]

JAI BILAS—THE MAHARAJAH'S PALACE.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.



From a Photo. by]

ENTRANCE TO JAI BILAS PALACE.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.

beneath the rays of the afternoon sun. Side by side with the walls of the palaces are the streets and houses of the new town of Gwalior, known as the Lushkar, which, by its name, meaning "camp," as Sir Lepel Griffin has pointed out, significantly recalls the days when the Mahratta chief from whom the present ruler of Gwalior is descended was no more than the leader of a marauding clan, who had no fixed habitation, and whose tent was his home. The mention of Sir Lepel's name recalls that day, memorable in the history of

Gwalior, when, in the year 1886, the late Maharajah died, and the temporary guardianship of his young successor lay in the hands of this distinguished official, to whom the whole country of India owes a debt of gratitude which it cannot easily repay.

I have learnt from private official papers which have been intrusted to me the immense care and consideration which Sir Lepel Griffin displayed in his arrangements for the education and for the future of the young child who, in the time to come, would



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.



From a Photo. by] THE MAHARAJAH'S STUDY AND PHOTOGRAPHING ROOM. [Johnstone & Hofman.

the rooms here are as English as we could make them. It took 10,000 men working day and night for many months to get it ready in time. Here was the Prince's private sitting-room, which I now use as my study; I showed it to the poor Duke of Clarence when he was here three years ago. Here I develop my photographs, attend to the financial matters of the Palace, and here is where I used to prepare my lessons for Mr. Johnstone."

At this moment

be called upon to rule over this great tract of country. And well, indeed, have those arrangements been carried out, as I was to discover for myself in a very short period of time.

As we drove up to the beautiful entrance of the Jai Bilas Palace, where a guard of honour received the Prince with a Royal salute, we saw standing there Surgeon-Major Crofts, the Maharajah's guardian and medical attendant, and Mr. W. Johnstone, his tutor, to both of whom he is devoted, and at whose hands he has met the most tender consideration.

As we mounted the stairs and entered the splendid drawing-room, or Durbar Hall, the Prince drew my attention to the portraits of Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince of Wales. "My father," said he, "built the greater part of this Palace in a few months in order that he might receive the Prince of Wales, and you will note

Mr. Johnstone himself and Dr. Crofts entered the room, and joined in our conversation.

"The Prince," said Mr. Johnstone, "has gone through the ordinary curriculum of the English boy's education, except that Marathi, English, and Hindustani have taken the place of the classics. But we have given up doing lessons now, haven't we, Maharajah Sahib? And we are now going in for more practical work"; and, as he spoke, he showed me some



From a Photo. by]

THE MAHARAJAH HOLDING COURT.

[Mr. Onrait.

admirable surveying work which the Prince had been doing that very morning. "And again, as you see in that photo., he is taking up magisterial work under the direction of Colonel Robertson. The accused is a boy in custody of two policemen, charged with theft from that third man who is standing near. I was present at the trial, and we were all struck with the Maharajah's interest and insight into the whole matter. He is curiously just in his ideas for an Oriental," he continued, in a low voice, as the Prince and Dr. Crofts were laughing together in a corner of the room, "and the people are already devotedly attached to him."

"You must show Mr. Blathwayt some of your photographs, Maharajah," said Dr. Crofts, as he came up to where I was standing.

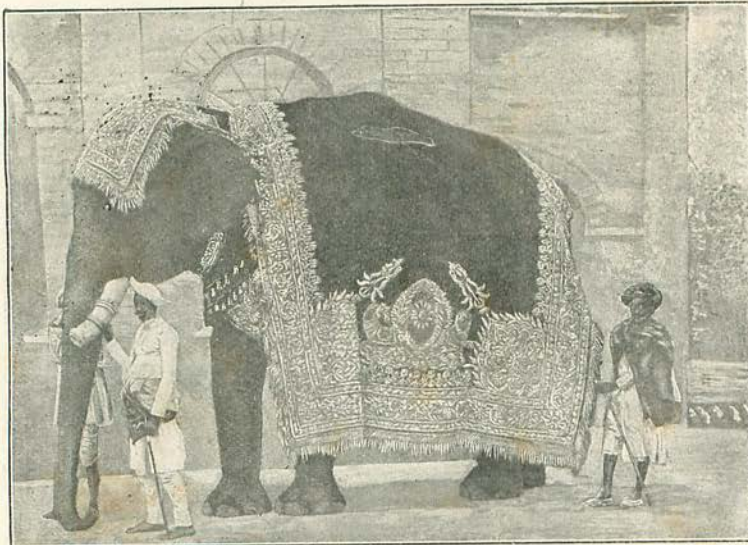
"Well, Maharajah Sahib," said I, "won't you photograph that splendid elephant of State that I see there? I am sure the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE would like that!"—for we had already agreed that I should write an article on all I saw and heard in Gwalior.

The Maharajah was much pleased at the idea, and accordingly down we all trooped into the great courtyard of the Palace, where stood the magnificently-caparisoned animal, of which the Maharajah took the photograph here reproduced. A beautiful little railway-engine and carriages passed us slowly by as we stood by the elephant, and the Maharajah proposed that we should all be photographed by its side (which was accordingly done, the Prince and myself standing by the first carriage, as is shown in the picture), and that we should

then take a run through the gardens. The Maharajah himself drove the engine—no one in India is a more skilled engine-driver than he—and swiftly we rolled through the wide-spreading gardens of the Palace grounds. Highly cultivated as they are in some parts, yet in others there are picturesque tracts of wilderness which forcibly recalled to me Swinburne's description of "the Forsaken Garden"—where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses now lie dead.

"When I first came here in 1886," said Dr. Crofts, as we passed some magnificent tanks, and where, as I was told, ten thousand fountains are sometimes to be seen playing at once, "I had the greatest difficulty in getting the Prince sufficient exercise. He was never allowed outside the Palace, as he was too sacred a personage to be seen by ordinary people. A wall three and a half miles long was thrown round the gardens, and inside of this he took exercise as a prisoner might. At last I insisted he must go out more, and he was allowed to do so, but never at first without an escort of a thousand cavalry. Now, as you see, he goes about just as he pleases. He is far too active and too independent to be kept down by such trammels, I can assure you. That pretty house away to the right," continued my companion, "is the guest house" (of which a picture is shown at the end of this article); "and," he went on a few minutes later, as we passed some elephants busily engaged in piling wood, and which scarcely heeded the scream of the

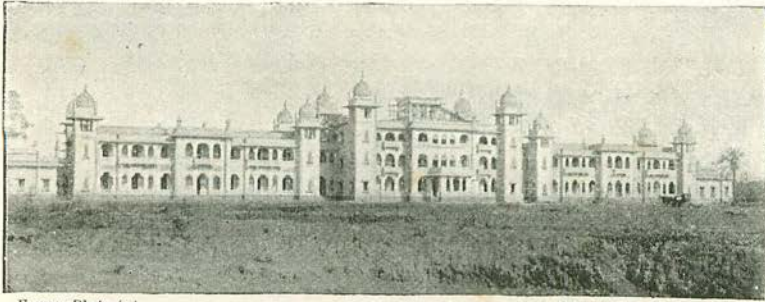
engine, "here is the hospital which we are building, and which will cost at least 500,000 rupees. It is much needed, I can assure you, for I and my staff of native doctors treated last year no fewer than 70,000 patients. The Maharajah takes the greatest interest in medical work, and he is well up in the principles of anatomy and physiology, besides having gone through an ambulance course. I can assure you he is quite an expert himself in minor surgery. He



From a Photo. by the

THE MAHARAJAH'S STATE ELEPHANT.

[Maharajah of Gwalior



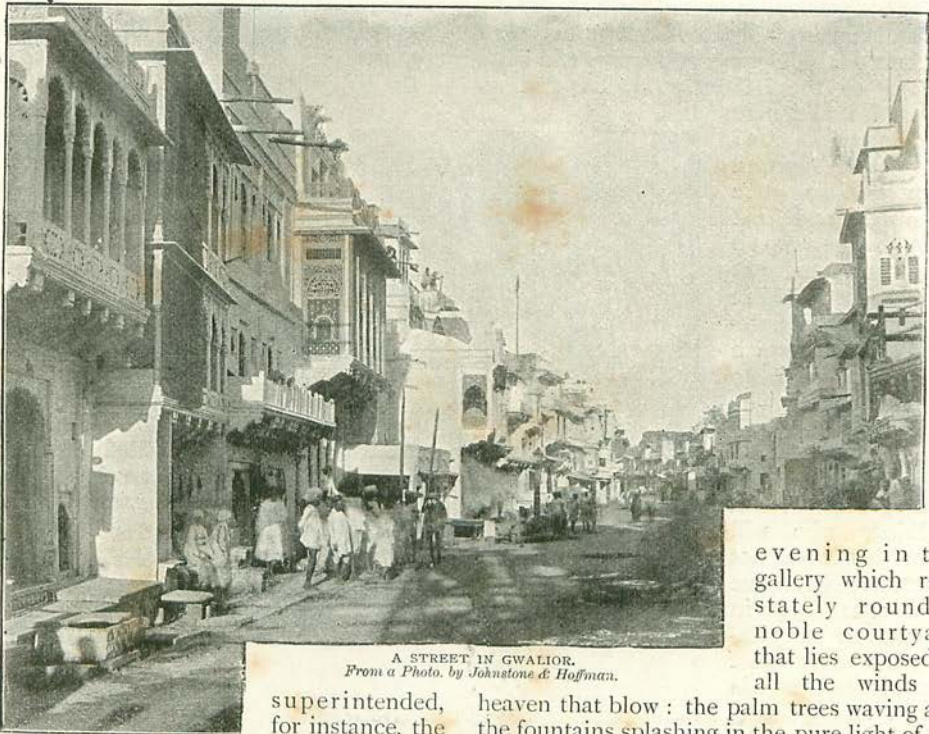
From a Photo by

THE NEW HOSPITAL, GWALIOR.

[Mr. Onrait, Chief of Police.

can set a broken limb in splints, arrest hemorrhage, and bandage a wound with the best of us. We had a good instance of this last week. A workman fell down from a scaffold and broke his arm, and the Prince, who was close by at the time, bound it up and attended to him most tenderly until I came up. We want to make him a thoroughly good all-round man, and he is shaping out well to become so. Some of the native papers have been jeering at him for the interest he takes in engineering, photography, and electricity — he

of charm and beauty for the wearied and worn ones who will one day occupy it. Its conception and erection are due almost entirely to the energy and self-sacrifice of Dr. Crofts. That night, by way of entertainment and in the presence of the leading officials and the nobles of the State of Gwalior, I delivered a lecture on well-known people I had met, which was illustrated by lime-light slides, the Maharajah himself manipulating the lantern through which they were shown. I shall not easily forget the beauty of the scene that met my eyes, as we gathered at the end of the



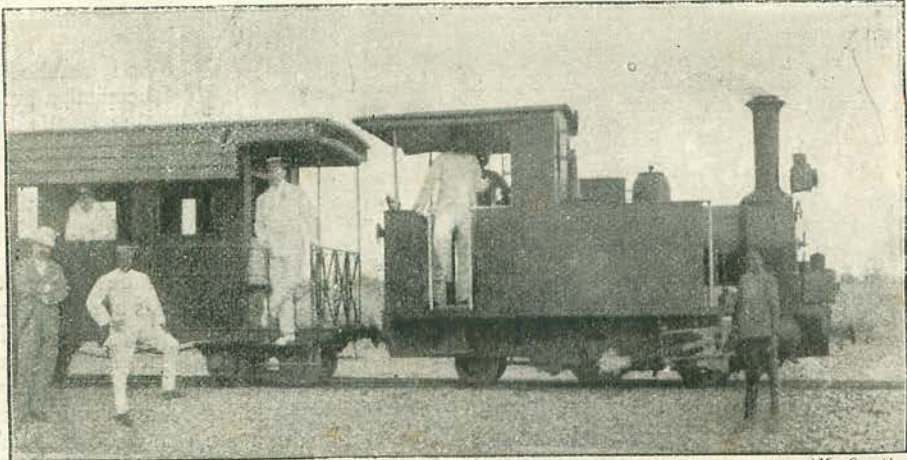
A STREET IN GWALIOR.

From a Photo. by Johnstone & Hoffman.

electric lighting of that enormous Palace — but we uphold him in everything that will make a really useful man of him.”

superintended, for instance, the whole of the

evening in the gallery which runs stately round a noble courtyard that lies exposed to all the winds of heaven that blow : the palm trees waving and the fountains splashing in the pure light of the Indian moon, and above and around us the deep blue heavens, in which the stars burned bright as they never burn in our cold, grey, foggy atmosphere,



From a Photo. by]

THE MAHARAJAH'S PRIVATE TRAIN.

[Mr. Orust.

On the following day, after a game of tennis at the Residency, in which the Maharajah joined, and during which his fine native band played a selection of European music, Colonel Robertson told me something of the Prince's life and habits. "Although," said he, "His Highness has had an English education, and has been instructed in the customs and usages of English society, still he remains a true Hindu prince, and observes all the religious ordinances and caste customs of the Hindus. He has had no special instruction in English politics other than that obtained from reading the newspapers and from intercourse with Europeans, nor has he been instructed in the European management of nations which is not applicable to Eastern States. The object that I and all of us have in his bringing up is to make him a true gentleman and a Prince who will regard his State, not as a source of revenue to be squandered in the pursuit of pleasure, but as a trust committed to his charge, and to keep him in touch and sympathy with the people over whom he has been called upon

to rule. He is very tolerant to other religions in his State, and he takes special care that everyone shall have fair play. He is much interested in criminal and civil law, and he has already decided several cases under my guidance and direction. Like his father, who was a general in the British Army, he is an enthusiastic soldier, and he has been through a course of military equitation, and has been thoroughly instructed in drill and camp exercise."

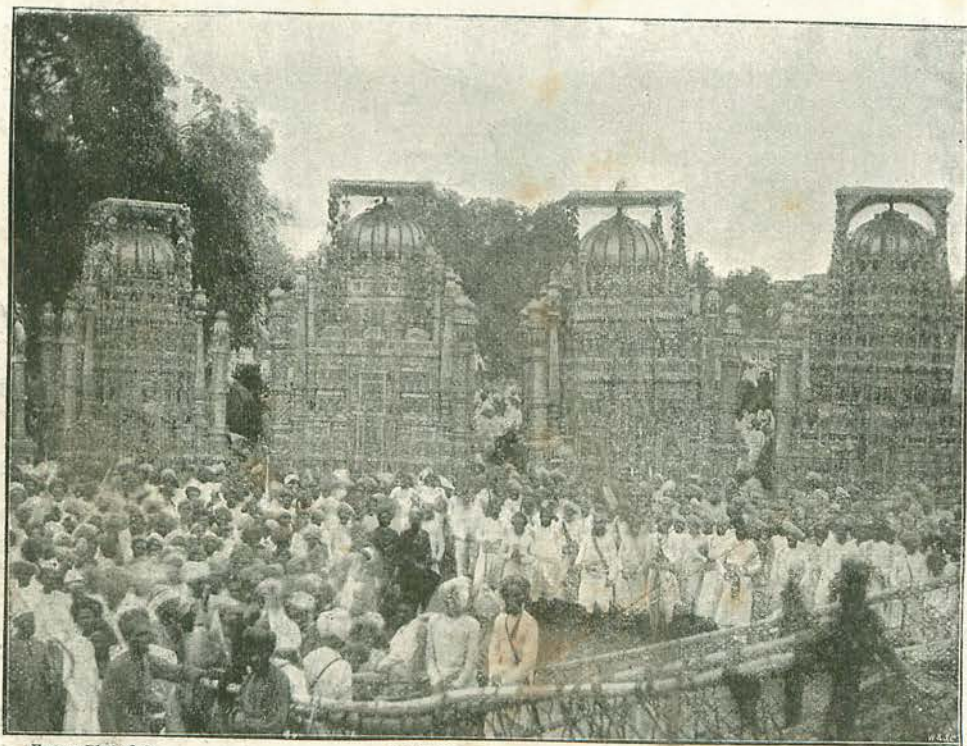
By this time night had fully come, the Maharajah had driven off, and it was time for us to prepare for our journey. For the Maharajah had been asked to open a new railway line, which ran far into the interior of the State, and a large party was to accompany him for the ceremony. As we alighted at the brilliantly illuminated station we discovered a long "special" drawn up at the platform, in the centre of which train were the Royal carriages.

Something like two hundred people accompanied the Prince: the Prime Minister of Gwalior, or President of the Council, Baba Sahib Jadu; the Resident

BABA SAHIB JADU, PRIME MINISTER.
From a Photo. by Johnstone & Hoffman.

and Mrs. Robertson; many of the nobles; Mr. Summerville Large, the Chief of the Engineering Staff, a man of the greatest service to Gwalior; Mr. Onraït, an English gentleman who presides over 15,000 police; Mr. Johnstone, and myself. The long night through we travelled, until at six o'clock on the following morning we drew up at a large station and clearing in the wild country, to be greeted by one of the most magnificent spectacles I have ever seen. There upon the platform stood thin red lines of native troops, who presented arms as the train came to a halt, and the band played the National Anthem. Hard by from a neighbouring hill a battery of guns fired a Royal salute, while round and about was gathered a brilliantly attired mass of some five to ten thousand people,

hidden from the gaze of European and native alike, a very curious scene took place. An English engineer, who had behaved with incredible folly, and had been set upon and severely beaten by some native soldiers, preferred a formal charge against his assailants, who were brought before the Resident, the Maharajah, and the President of the Council to be tried. The men in reply assured their judges that the engineer had first attacked them, and they displayed pretended wounds in proof of their assertion. The Resident, however, suspecting the truth of their story, bade them remove their hand-ages, when it was promptly discovered that there was nothing the matter with them. After a trial, in which the most conspicuous fairness of dealing was displayed by both



From a Photo. by]

FESTIVAL AT GWALIOR.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.

assembled to do honour to the young Prince, of whom many had heard, but whom comparatively few had ever seen. And as he stepped from his carriage and walked down the long lines of infantry, keenly inspecting them at every point, the people pressed, salaaming round him.

Here, while the ladies of the harem passed to the special tent prepared for them, and where they were most carefully

native and European officials, the soldiers were sentenced to a light term of imprisonment, and we once more proceeded on our journey to our destination—Goonna.

Arrived here, the scene was even more brilliant than that which I have just described. Upon the platform was drawn up a guard of honour from the splendid regiment of the Central India Horse, under the command of Captain Watson, whose father, Sir



From a Photo. by]

THE MAHARAJAH'S FIRST DURBAR.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.

John Watson, V.C., did so much for our Indian cavalry. Here we all alighted, and at once set off for the camp, the Prince preceding us in a carriage and pair and attended by a cavalry escort, whilst the Resident and Mrs. Robertson and myself followed close behind. In the afternoon the officers of the Central India Horse, whose kindness and hospitality will not soon fade from my mind, arranged for a special display of tent-pegging. The scene was a very splendid one. The troopers were drawn up in line, from which now and again one would dart forth with a wild cry, and, careering over the ground, he would swoop down with his spear, to raise it almost invariably with the "peg" sticking to its point, as he swept on with a triumphant "huzza!" to a distant part of the field. The crowd itself was a mass of life and colour, and above all shone "the splendid silent sun" blazing down upon us. Several of the officers, and notably Captain Watson and Mr. Daunt, took part in the tournament, and were no whit behind the native soldiers in the skill and grace of their movements.

On the following day, word having been brought to the camp that panthers were in the neighbourhood, a shooting expedition was arranged in honour of the Maharajah and myself, as the newest arrival in India.

Early in the morning men had been sent to see if the decoy goats and buffaloes had been killed, and the reply having come back in the affirmative, we all started off—a brilliant cavalcade. The Maharajah rode in the centre, the Resident, Captain Watson, and I on either side, while behind us steadily pounded the stately and magnificent soldiers forming the Royal escort. Now and again I would turn my head round to admire the manner in which they sat their horses and the picturesque aspect they presented, with their coloured turbans, their soldier-like, handsome faces, and the points of their spears glittering in the golden sunshine. Arrived at the scene of action, where upwards of one hundred and fifty coolies had been beating the woods, we were met by the "Gader"—the head man, as it were, of the shoot—and were assigned our places.

The panthers, we were told, had taken refuge in a cave, above and around which stood some very handy trees. In two of these trees, which afforded the place of honour, the Prince and I were directed to seat ourselves, while the Prime Minister and Colonel Robertson perched themselves in two other trees close to the cave, and the officers who were with us also placed themselves as directed. Each of us, of course, had a man specially to attend upon him.

The scene and occasion remain indelibly stamped upon my mind. As we each sat in silence, so deep that we scarcely dared to breathe, and when I had loaded my rifle, I looked round about me. I can recall, as though it were but an hour ago, the surrounding country : a lofty hill, bathed in the blazing sunshine, lay many miles away, blue in the delicate shimmer of heat ; a kite wheeled in the air uttering its harsh, metallic cry ; away to the rear stood a patient elephant ; about us in the immediate foreground, hanging over the cave, were the coolies, throwing bombs and fire into the yawning cavern, from which

and his grandfather. Someone had alluded to the recent troubles in Burma, and the Prince remarked : "Well, I don't blame them ; what right have the English there at all ?" To which the Resident, I think it was, replied : "My dear Maharajah Sahib, it is no worse than you, a Mahratta Prince, taking possession of and ruling over Gwalior."

The Prince laughed heartily, and acknowledged that he was fairly caught.

I asked His Highness what he most wanted to see when he came to England. He replied : "The Queen, of course."

We fell into a conversation on the visits



From a Photo. by

THE MAHARAJAH'S LAST DURBAR.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.]

issued smoke in quantities, but no panther. At last, just when I had given up hope, there was a crackling as of dried leaves beneath the feet, a rush and a roar, and a magnificent panther bounded into the open. The Prince immediately raised his rifle, and so also did I—one moment, and the poor beast lay dead.

I am sadly hurried in my account for want of space, but I must devote a few lines to the conversation that took place as we all sat eating sandwiches and drinking welcome whisky-pegs, which took the form of soda-water or lemonade in the case of the Prince

of Indian Princes to England, and I related to my companions what Colonel Massy, the Deputy Commissioner at Delhi, had told me occurred when he had visited England the previous year in attendance upon the Maharajah of Kapurthala. The Maharajah, although delighted with the hospitality, had complained to Colonel Massy that his hosts invariably asked him "how he liked England," and gave him but little information on the country.

On the following day the Maharajah was received by Mr. Gladstone, who began, as all

the others had begun, by asking him "how he liked England."

The Prince smiled slyly at the Colonel, and replied: "Very much, indeed; but, Mr. Gladstone, I want you to tell me all about Ireland and Home Rule."

The old statesman was delighted, and entered into a long and learned dissertation upon the Home Rule Bill.

"But what will you do when the Lords reject it?" said the Maharajah.

At this cool assumption on the Prince's part that all his labour was to be in vain, the Grand Old Man became much excited, and only cooled down on the Prince requesting that he might see Mrs. Gladstone.

"I shall not think my visit to England complete unless I see your wife, Mr. Gladstone," said he.

On the appearance of the lady, the Maharajah, after having been introduced, proceeded to regularly interview her on the subject of her husband's daily life and actions. No-

thing was too unimportant: what did he eat for breakfast, how did he spend his day; did he amuse himself like other people, could he sleep well, and so on; and, at the conclusion of the interview, he said: "I have only one more favour to ask you, Mrs. Gladstone. Will you give me your own photo. and that of your husband, and will you please write your name upon it?"

The Maharajah Scindia pondered deeply over this instance of his brother Prince's enterprise, and he was only aroused out of it by my asking him what he thought of Lord Meath's proposition that the Indian Princes should sit in the House of Lords at home.

"You might go, sir, as member for Gwalior," one of the party suggested.

"I would rather stay here in India," he replied, with much simplicity; and Colonel Robertson closed the conversation by remarking: "Precisely, Maharajah; none of us can spare you from your own home and country."



From a Photo. by]

THE MAHARAJAH'S GUEST HOUSE.

[Johnstone & Hoffman.