

THE QUEEN IN PERSIA.

Persia was the last country to be visited on the Royal Tour. The Shah and Queen Farah were at Mehrabad, airport of Teheran, to receive Her Majesty and the Duke. In came the Britannia aircraft and another stage was beginning of the 20,000 mile journey. The Queen was returning the Shah's state visit to Britain, renewing the friendship between the two Royal families and the two countries.

Prince Philip wore Field Marshal's uniform, to meet the Shah who was in the uniform of Commander in Chief of his army.

Eight miles from Teheran stands the Mausoleum of the Shah's father, Reza Shah.

In Esfahan some older monuments were visited, including the wildly celebrated Masjide-Shah Mosque. Persians claim it to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the whole world. And as Persia is a land of carpets, the way was carpeted as far as the superlatively beautiful silver and gold screen.

The Royal visitors might well have imagined themselves back at the Taj Mahal. The Mosque was built in the 17th century, in a period when architecture in this fashion, at once ornate and inspiring, attained its highest achievements.

The Mosque is 300 years old, but in Persia three centuries are but a short time. The ruins of Persepolis recall a civilisation dating back perhaps 2,500 years. The city was captured and burned by Alexander the Great, 2,300 years ago. Up the grand staircase the kings of the ancient Persian empire rode on horseback to enter the Palace on ceremonial occasions.

In its day Persepolis, with its wealth and magnificence, was the envy of every country that was aware of its existence. It is a reminder today that Persia was a great Empire when much of Europe was little more than savage. Persia has celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Achaemenian Dynasty, which flourished in this wonderful place.

Though glorying in its past, Persia today is no less proud of its virile present. At the Amjadih Stadium girls of the Reza-Shah Kabir School gave a display of Callisthenics, in honour of the Queen. It is the Shah's policy to encourage physical culture in the schools throughout his dominion. Since he came to the throne great strides have been made in education and in the general welfare of the younger people.

Time now for the men to take over, with a display of skill and strength.

It certainly calls for strength to wield the Persian clubs. All too soon Her Majesty's brief stay in Persia was over, and the great tour neared its end. In India, Pakistan, Nepal and Persia the Queen has left happy and abiding memories. Perhaps never in Royal records has there been a more successful tour.