

CHAPTER XVIII.

Chamaraja Wodeyar X—1881—1894.

Four distinguished visitors—Lord Dufferin, Prince Albert Victor, Lord Lansdowne and Field-Marshal Sir George Wolsley (later Viscount) Commander-in-chief.

Lord Lytton was the last Viceroy that visited Mysore in the days of the British Commission. But his visit was purely a business one in connection with the mitigation of the acute famine that prevailed at the time in the Mysore State. Lord Dufferin who succeeded the Marquis of Ripon was the first Viceroy to pay a friendly and ceremonial visit to the Maharaja at Mysore in November 1886. The Countess of Dufferin also accompanied her husband on this occasion. His Excellency arrived at Mysore on the 1st December and was received by His Highness and other principal officers and citizens of the State with all the honours due to the rank of so distinguished a guest. There was an exchange of visits later between the Maharaja and the Viceroy on the same day. At night the Palace was brilliantly illuminated.

On the same night a State banquet was given at which the Maharaja proposed the health of the Queen-Empress, and the Dewan on behalf of the Maharaja proposed the health of the Viceroy and of Lady Dufferin in a speech full of sentiments of gratitude to the British Government for the generosity shown in restoring to their ancient heritage the old Hindu Royal family of Mysore and for the benefits conferred on the country by British rule for a period of half a century. Towards the end of the Dewan's speech a reference was also made to the movement started by the Countess of Dufferin whose labour of love in the cause of the suffering women of India had won for her a high place in the affections of the Princes and peoples of India.

Lord Dufferin in responding to the toast gave expression, among other matters, to these sentiments:—"Under the benevolent rule of the Maharaja good government, enlightened progress and the blessings of education are everywhere in the ascendent and

there is no State within the compass of the Indian Empire which has more fully justified the wise policy of the British Government in supplementing its own direct administration of its vast territories by the associated rule of our great feudatory Princes..... It has now been my good fortune to have passed through most of the Native States of India and to have come into intimate contact with the Chiefs, and I have no hesitation in saying that though there may be differences between them, though some states may be more advanced than the others, some rulers less sensitive than others to the weighty responsibilities imposed on them by Providence, on the whole my experiences have been eminently satisfactory and reassuring and the Queen-Empress and the Government of Great Britain have the greatest reason to congratulate themselves on the general enlightenment, the desire to do their duty and the conscientious application to affairs which are so generally prevalent amongst them."

After the banquet, there was in addition to the display of fireworks a performance of a very interesting and exciting kind of war-dance by a party of Manjarabad Gowdas. Illuminated by various coloured lights, the figures and faces of the dancers are described to have assumed most fantastic appearances, while the successive flashes from their swords lent a fierce lustre to the performance and conveyed the impression of a real warfare.

The next day the Viceroy received an address from the members of the Representative Assembly of Mysore and referring to the general contentment prevailing in the country said:—"That you should use such terms does not surprise me, for your good fortune has placed you under the rule of one of the most intelligent, upright and high-minded among the great Princes of India and when I leave this country, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that, at all events so far as this part of the country is concerned, its welfare, its proper security and its peace are amply provided for..... I am very glad that you have touched upon the question of education, as it gives me an opportunity of impressing in as earnest and as strong a language as I can command, the extraordinary pleasure I have experienced in seeing on every side such

manifest signs of the deep interest with which that subject is regarded in this State as well as of the liberal and intelligent energy with which its development is being prosecuted. When I passed along what I imagine must have been a quarter of a mile of street, lined on either side in rows of eight and ten deep, with the youth of the country congregated under their respective teachers, I felt that you were laying broad and deep for all time to come the foundations of a prosperous future. But great as has been my satisfaction at these proofs of the progress made in general education, I was still more pleased by a sight which, I imagine, is not to be seen in any other part of India and that was the appearance of rows and rows of young ladies belonging to the highest caste families assembled together under the same admirable system and enjoying, as far as I can understand, as extensive opportunities of acquiring knowledge, of enlarging their experience and of strengthening their understanding as could be found in any of the most advanced cities of Europe. And those gentlemen who are the leaders of society and who represent the aristocracy of the land, who have in so generous and liberal-minded a manner seconded the able efforts of Her Highness the Maharani to establish the Mysore female school are entitled to the greatest credit for their exertions..... I am pleased to think that the Maharaja should have called to his counsels men of such intelligence, influence and authority as I see around me."

On the 2nd December Lady Dufferin presided at a prize distribution to the pupils of the Maharani's Girls' School. This school was started on the 21st January 1881 with a strength of 28 pupils. It was necessary to establish this school in order to make women's education popular among the upper grades of the Hindu society consistently with their cherished customs and manners. At the time of Lady Dufferin's visit in December 1886 the strength of the school had risen to 463 pupils, of whom 6 had reached the high school stage. A home-teaching branch was opened to continue the education of such girls as could no longer attend school on account of their domestic circumstances and to impart instruction to some elderly ladies who began to express a desire for studying at home being unable and unwilling to attend school in consequence of their conditions of life. This branch began with 15 pupils and two

teachers and in 1886 when Lady Dufferin visited the school there were 67 pupils, one of whom was a middle aged widow belonging to a respectable orthodox family. One subject on which special stress was laid in the school was the teaching of Hindu music which was considered essential for women for being sung on festive occasions. The study of Sanskrit occupied an important position in the curriculum, for it was deemed a living language so far as moral and religious readings were concerned. After the prize distribution was over, Lady Dufferin and the Viceroy proceeded to shake hands with a number of those present and expressed their warm interest in the work which had been undertaken. At night there was an entertainment in the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall which was brilliantly illuminated on the occasion. The entertainment programme included a nautch, a performance on swords and a Hindu drama 'Droupadi Swayamvara.' The last was acted in Kanada by a group of high caste young men. The Viceroy seemed interested in the whole performance but especially with the dancing on swords. After the entertainment was over, he went up to examine the stand upon which the blades were fixed.

Later, after Lady Dufferin returned to England, she published a book called "Our Viceregal Life in India" in which occurs the following passage:—"When we saw them (the young children of the Maharaja, two girls and a boy) they were all carried in by men, though the eldest girl is six years old. She and her sister looked intensely solemn and wore their hair plaited very stiffly and smoothly down. The boy looked very delicate."

The next visitor to Mysore was the lamented Prince Albert Victor, eldest son of King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness landed at Bombay on the 9th November 1889 and after visiting Hyderabad and Madras left the latter place on the night of the 22nd. On the morning of the 23rd the royal train passed Bangalore on its way to Mysore and halted at Seringapatam for a while. Here the first sight noticed by the Prince was that near the railway bridge where feathery bamboos were hanging down to the water's edge of the Kaveri river and spreading their roots were completing the destruction of the fort-walls begun by British

guns in 1799. The Prince visited the corner where the breach was made and through which the British troops entered and the place where they divided themselves into two parties. The next place visited was the summer-house of Tippu known as Daria Dowlat, a beautiful garden-house of open halls and verandahs. From the Daria Dowlat the royal party proceeded to the Mausoleum of Haidar and Tippu. After luncheon, the party crossed the second branch of the Kaveri at Paschimavahini and boarded the special train.

At the Mysore Railway-station the Prince was met by the Maharaja attended by the Dewan and other officers as well as by notable men of the place, besides a complimentary escort consisting of the Mysore Lancers, gaily caparisoned elephants, the Mysore infantry clad in scarlet, carriages drawn by teams of white horses wearing pink aigrattes and other paraphernalia of magnificence.

The next day the 24th of November was spent in exchange of visits between the Prince and the Maharaja and in a visit to the Maharani's Girls' School. At the time the Prince visited the school it is stated that there were five hundred well-dressed and intelligent girls between the ages of six and sixteen. From the Maharani's Girls' School the Prince paid a visit to the Palace. At night there was a banquet in honour of the distinguished visitor. After the banquet was over, His Royal Highness was driven round the city to witness the illuminations. The large tank to the east of the fort known as the Doddakere tank was lighted up by thousands of wicks burning in earthen saucers containing oil. Eight circular basket boats floated over a surface of small rippling waves, their gunwales being picked out with lamps, the reflections of which shimmered down the slowly moving surface of the water. In the centre of the lake was a glittering white house built of pith and talc, all one blaze of light. Later in the same night there was an entertainment in the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall where were presented some unusual features. On either side of the vestibule had been placed transparencies exhibiting types of the various classes of people who inhabited the Mysore country. These were all in pairs, male and female, in their usual costume. Among them

Were a few peculiar ones—the Saranas who served at the temple, the male carrying a bell in his right and a bunch of peacock feathers in his left hand and an umbrella under his left arm, and the female also carried a bell and wore a rough bead necklace and bead wristlets; Vuribattidasiyas or fire-eaters, the man carrying a saucer of fire on his head and in his left hand a lighted wick, the end of which he now and again put into his mouth, the female carrying faggots under her left arm; Jenukuruba or honey-drawer dressed in very simple costume with only a cloth girt about his loins and carrying only a stick.

On the morning of the 25th November the Maharaja drove the Prince forty-six miles on his way to the Khedda camp in the Chamarajnar taluk where G. P. Sanderson, the famous elephant shikar of the time, awaited the party. The locality chosen for the operations was the Biligirirangan hills, a small range by some thirty miles in length by ten in width which formed a portion of the southern boundary of Mysore. His Royal Highness' drive from Mysore to the camp was somewhat long and wearisome and the last five miles were accomplished on horseback under a hot sun. The royal party and the gentlemen accompanying arrived at a place called Budipadaga at 1-30 p.m. The quiet neighbourhood of this place was enlivened by much bustle and preparations, with the result that a canvas city had come into existence. There was one main road terminating at one end at His Royal Highness' tent and flanked on each side by the tents of His Highness the Maharaja, Colonel Sir Oliver St. John the British Resident in Mysore, Dewan Seshadri Iyer and of the other visitors who were invited to be present and officials whose duties necessitated their presence there. Native shop-keepers were established with stocks of rice and other provisions for sale to the camp followers. A temporary post office was also opened.

After bath and breakfast, a start was made for the Khedda where a herd of elephants had been impounded. His Royal Highness and Sir Edward Bradford who was attached to the personal staff of the Prince rode on an elephant and Sanderson accompanied them to explain to His Royal Highness the arrange-

ments by which the herd had been surrounded and what the further programme was. The Maharaja, Sir Oliver St. John and others rode on horseback, while the Dewan trotted along in a small bullock-cart belonging to Sanderson which was well adapted for jungle travel. On arriving at the Khedda the party proceeded on foot outside the enclosure to a sort of jungle grand stand. This stand overlooked at a distance of thirty yards the gateway through which the elephants were to be driven into the small Khedda or enclosure in which they were to be secured. The pavilion was screened with leaves as were also the gateway and the barricades and the whole of the enclosure and the ground in front of it where all had lately been trampled and bare had been converted into a dense, cool covert by the simple horticultural expedient of sticking feathery bamboos and leafy saplings into the ground to a height greater than the elephants' backs. The pavilion was sixty feet long and ten wide and a level space had been made for it by cutting into the steep hillside and using the earth for banking up the floor. Along the whole length of the pavilion a bench made of bamboos extended and the floor and roof were neatly matted. The rope by which the gate of the Khedda was suspended was led to this place and secured, so that by cutting a small cord the gate was to be released. The Maharaja was entrusted with a knife for cutting the cord, an experienced hunter standing near to apprise when the correct moment arrived.

All had been prepared for the drive before the arrival of His Royal Highness and the party. The beaters were in position and only awaited the signal to begin. A platform had been constructed on a tree which overhung a stream about twenty yards from the gate by which the elephants were to enter the first enclosure and where it was necessary for Sanderson to station himself to help the men at the moment of getting the elephants through the gates and where the beasts were likely to break and charge the beaters. The platform had been made large enough to accommodate more than one in case the Prince desired to see the drive from that point. This the Prince elected to do and accompanied by Captain Harvey and Sanderson, His Royal Highness climbed the ladder into the

platform which had been made comfortable by an elephant's soft pad being spread as a cushion to sit on.

Immediately the signal was given the beat commenced and after much varied fortune the herd breaking back more than once, the animals came and stood close to the tree on which stood the Prince's platform. His Royal Highness had a good view of them here at the distance of but a few yards. The herd ought to have been driven in at the first attempt. But the beaters were somewhat excited on the occasion and it was some time before the herd was made to descend the bank of the stream under the tree on which was the platform. At last in a compact herd, each individual elephant struggling not to be last, they crowded through the gateway into the first enclosure urged on by several charges of small shot which His Royal Highness plied them with. The herd continued its march through this enclosure into the inner one, above which on the hillside a visitors' stand had been erected and the rope controlling the gate of which was in the Maharaja's hands. As soon as all the elephants entered the inner enclosure His Highness dropped the gate. All was made secure in a short time, when the dividing gate between the enclosures was hauled up and on a few of the hunters climbing the stockade and showing themselves, the elephants retired into the first enclosure. They were then left for the night with the run of the two enclosures which were guarded all round with fires by the hunters. His Royal Highness and party returned on horseback led by men with torches to the camp at Budipadaga.

About 1 p.m. the next day the Prince and the visitors again started for the Khedda to see the operation of tying up the captives. By the time the royal party arrived, the elephants had all been driven into the inner enclosure where they were temporarily confined, while the gate of the outer enclosure was opened and the tame elephants or 'Koonkies' as they were called were admitted. These were twelve in number and had been brought to Mysore some months previously from Dacca, 1000 miles away in Bengal. They were all females except one and were all highly trained animals that had been employed in the Bengal Kheddas. They were

exceedingly docile and allowed the men to move about among their legs, taking care not to injure them intentionally or by inadvertance. The Mahuts or keepers of these elephants were also men from Dacca. These Koonkies were drawn up in a row awaiting the re-admission to the outer enclosure of the herd confined in the inner one. Some of the Koonkies had ropes hanging down their shoulders as a sort of ladder, by which the men below could quickly climb up their backs during the work of tying up if danger threatened them. Seated behind the Mahuts on the backs of two of the best elephants were two chief rope-tiers who with no clothing but a pair of short drawers and with the ready ropes in their hands were anxious to begin the difficult and dangerous work of leashing each elephant's legs together.

When the Prince, the Maharaja, Sir Oliver St. John and visitors had taken their places, the gate dividing the enclosures was opened and the herd was driven towards the enclosure where the Koonkies were. As soon as some ten or twelve elephants had entered, the others were frightened back and the gate was closed, the object being to make the work of the Koonkies more easy by only giving them a few elephants at a time to deal with. Among the elephants that were cut off from entry was the mother of a calf which latter had found its way in advance of her. Missing her little one and divining where it had gone, the mother charged the gate with the force, it is said, of a battering ram. The men had just commenced to secure it but she burst it open and with the heavy flap gate dangling on her head and back she got through and joined her young one.

The wild elephants now approached the Koonkies which were drawn up in a line to make their acquaintance as it were. No sooner was the dividing gate once more secured than the work of tying up commenced. A tame one was ranged up along each side of the largest wild one, while another was placed face to face to it to prevent it from moving forward. The rope-tiers now slipped to the ground and standing close behind the wild elephant dexterously secured its legs together by thin ropes in a figure of 8. During this time the tame elephants on each side of the wild one squeezed

it tightly between them and it being unable to see behind was not aware of what was being done to its hind legs as the ropes were lightly tied. A soft rope of loosely twisted jute as thick as a man's arm was now secured to one hind leg and the end taken to a tree by a rope-tier under shelter of a couple of tame elephants. Two turns being taken round the tree the wild elephant was backed against it from where it stood several yards away. This was done by the tame elephants between which it stood being backed, while the elephant facing the wild one butted and forced it to retire. After the tame ones left it, the wild elephant struggled hard to release itself by throwing itself on the ground and its hind legs raised straight behind it, but all to no avail. In this way the larger elephants were quickly secured, when the time of the youngsters came. For all of five and a half feet in height and under, the simple plan of lassoing was adopted. Each tame elephant had a stout, soft rope fastened round it, about 15 feet of the rope being free and having a running noose at the end. This was held open by the Mahut with both hands and thrown over the head of any young elephant that offered a good chance. In this manner all the elephants 37 in number were secured and after large cables had been put round the necks of the bigger ones, they were all marched out tied to one or two Koonkies according to size and were then fastened in a large clearing among the trees where the undergrowth had all been removed. Here fodder had been cut and stacked in readiness and despite the strangeness of their position, none of them refused the succulent grass and bamboo leaves that were placed before them.

After bison shooting for a day, the party returned to Mysore on the 28th November and left for Bangalore the next day, where also a grand reception was accorded to the Prince. Before the Prince proceeded to Travancore, one of the functions performed by His Royal Highness was the laying of the foundation-stone of a permanent building for the periodical horticultural show in the Lal Bagh gardens belonging to the Mysore Government.

The next visitor was Lord Lansdowne who was the second Viceroy to visit Mysore after the termination of the British

Commission. His Excellency accompanied by Lady Lansdowne and his staff arrived at Mysore on the 10th November 1892 and was received by the Maharaja, his principal officers and the leading men of the State with all the pomp and ceremonial usual on such occasions. The same night there was a State banquet in the Jagan Mohan Palace. Lord Lansdowne in responding to the toast of his health proposed by the Dewan on behalf of the Maharaja, referred to the momentous change which had been made eleven years previously in the administration of the country by placing it in the hands of an Indian Ruler and said that the responsibility of those who had taken that step was a very serious one. "I am glad to bear witness to the fact," he further said, "that His Highness has never given cause to regret the decision carried out in 1881 by Lord Ripon's Government. The Mysore State far from adding to our cares and anxieties has been administered with much success. Its people are contented with their position and its ruler has shown by his acts that he was worthy of the trust reposed in him. If the result had been different, the Maharaja would certainly have been held accountable. The result having been what it is, he is entitled to the most liberal measure of credit. He has proved himself an intelligent and upright ruler who has from the commencement of his reign shown himself alive to the duties of his position. His Highness has received an education which has enabled him to profit by the culture and understand the political ideas of the West. But he has not lost touch of his own people or forfeited their confidence and probably there is no State in India where the ruler and the ruled are on more satisfactory terms or in which the great principle upon which His Highness has insisted—Government should be for the happiness of the governed—receives a greater measure of practical recognition. There is, perhaps, no better test of the soundness of the administration than its ability to pass without discredit through a period of exceptional difficulty. The Mysore State has lately encountered such a trial and has, I am glad to say, surmounted it successfully. I have to express my acknowledgments of the manner in which His Highness has placed a portion of his troops under special discipline, in order to qualify them to take their place alongside of ours for the defence of the empire. I am

glad to think that that portion of the outlay which has been appropriated for the Imperial Service troops has been the means of adding to the resources of the empire as well as to the efficiency of the Mysore army without imposing an excessive burden upon the exchequer of the State. There is one other matter as to which I should like to say a few words. I have watched with the utmost interest the valuable experiment which His Highness has instituted in the formation of the consultative council known as the Mysore Representative Assembly. This council has been in existence ever since His Highness' accession and of late years he has increased its numbers and has invited the various Local Boards, Municipalities and Public Associations to depute members to it. More recently still, the wealthier classes of the community have been permitted to choose a certain proportion of the members and I understand that the qualification for membership has been fixed so as to include not only the largest land-holders and the most representative merchants and traders but also in certain cases the possession of a high education has been recognised as in itself a qualification. His Highness has found that his hands have been materially strengthened by the deliberations of the public body thus constituted and I sincerely congratulate him on the result of the experiment. It is one which possesses a particular interest for me, because as you are aware the Government of India is at this moment itself engaged in a very interesting attempt to increase the numbers and to enlarge the functions of its own Legislative Councils. His Highness in his desire to inform himself of the feelings of the leading classes and people of Mysore has, it seems to me, acted with true statesmanlike instincts..... I am glad to have this opportunity of publicly assuring His Highness of the goodwill and approval of the Government of India."

On the morning of the 12th November the party drove to Hinkul, a distance of 3 miles where the Imperial Service troops of Mysore was stationed. The regiment was drawn up on the parade ground under the command of Colonel McIntyre, Military Secretary to the Mysore Government, and was inspected by the Viceroy and the Maharaja and were then put through some manoeuvres culminating in the march past. The troops drew from

His Excellency encomiums for their smartness and up-to-date methods.

In the afternoon several addresses were presented to the Viceroy, one of which was from the members of the Representative Assembly in which reference was made to the necessity of some kind of legislation for the prevention of infant marriages and the Viceroy's reply to this part of the address is interesting:—"I shall be glad to hear," he said, "that your efforts to secure a measure of reform in regard to infant marriages are successful. The subject is one of very great difficulty. The Government of India has, as you are aware, given practical proof of its desire to protect immature children. But in passing the measure to which I refer—a measure which appeared to us to be required in the interests of humanity—the Government of India did not attempt to interfere with the domestic institutions of this country. As such, we feel that it is mainly to the spontaneous action of the people, whether within or without the limits of British India, that we must look for social reforms of the kind which you desire to effect."

To afford an opportunity for the Viceroy and his party to witness the catching of elephants, Khedda operations had been arranged in the Kakankote Jungles at a distance of about 30 miles from Mysore. G. P. Sanderson to whose labours the success of the Khedda conducted on the occasion of the visit of Prince Albert Victor in 1889 was due had died sometime previously and no one coveted to take his place at Kakankote. It was at such a time that an Amildar by name K. Shama Iyengar came forward and offered his services to relieve the Mysore Durbar from the embarrassing position in which they found themselves. Shama Iyengar's audacity was the wonder of his friends. Amateur though he was, he succeeded in every detail of the operations and was profusely complimented by the Viceroy on the success achieved by him. On the afternoon of the next day the party left for Seringapatam and after visiting all places of interest there, the Viceroy, Lady Lansdowne and staff left for Bangalore by special train.

Field-Marshal Sir George Wolsley (later Viscount) who succeeded the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-chief of the

British army in 1895 was a visitor to Mysore during the Dasara of 1894 and in a paper contributed by him to one of the English magazines has made the following interesting observations:—"The day after I reached Mysore, I drove with His Highness round the lake (or properly speaking, the tank) to the new race course and it was on that occasion that I first saw his five children—three daughters and two sons. The eldest princess is of marriageable age according to eastern etiquette being nearly fourteen. But owing to her father's enlightened views, she is fortunate enough to be exempted from what is called the Purdah..... Just before the race began, the children joined their father and kept up a brisk conversation all the time with their English governess by whom they were accompanied. The young princesses did not wear either hats or bonnets, but they had strings of pearls and other precious stones twisted in their dark, silky hair. The two little boys both of whom speak English very prettily wore coats of richly brocaded silk and trousers to match, together with turbans thickly sprinkled with pearls and emeralds which glittered and sparkled brightly as the sun's rays flashed upon them. Both they and their sisters looked bright and intelligent and they all seemed to be healthy and happy."