

## CHAPTER XX.

### Chamaraja Wodeyar X—1881—1894.

#### Tours of the Maharaja—His last days.

Chamaraja Wodeyar's first tour after he assumed power was made to Madras. Lord Ripon the Viceroy was to have visited Mysore in February 1884. But on account of the prevalence of cholera there, the visit did not take place. Lord Ripon was a very popular Viceroy and it was during his time that Chamaraja Wodeyar had been invested with power and the State restored to his rule. The Maharaja considering that it was but right on his part to make the personal acquaintance of Lord Ripon before he left India, proceeded to Madras and bade farewell to the out-going Viceroy.

In 1887 the Maharaja undertook another tour. On the 16th December of that year His Highness started on a tour to Northern India and halted at Bombay for ten days. Here he acquainted himself with the working of all the public institutions. The next important place he visited during this tour was Calcutta, where he returned the visit of the Earl of Dufferin who had visited the Mysore State in the previous year. General Roberts (afterwards Lord) who was the Commander-in-chief of the Indian army at the time gave a garden party in honour of the Maharaja. On the return journey His Highness paid visits to the Native States of Jeypore and Jodhpur, and while at Bombay he paid a visit to the Duke of Connaught who was then in command of the army.

In December 1892 the Maharaja again visited Calcutta travelling from Madras to that place by sea and returned the visit of Lord Lansdowne. In 1893 His Highness stayed for two months at Bombay and met Lord Elgin when he was on his way to Calcutta to assume the viceroyalty from Lord Lansdowne.

His Highness also toured on more than one occasion in various parts of the State and acquainted himself personally not only with the conditions of the country but also with the wants of his subjects.

These visits enabled His Highness to introduce various improvements both in his capital as well as in other places.

Chamaraja Wodeyar's last tour was undertaken in December 1894. His Highness left his capital on the 9th of that month with the Maharani and the children and a large retinue and passing through Poona, Allahabad and other places, finally reached Calcutta and on the 21st of that month visited the Viceroy Lord Elgin. On the 23rd His Highness had an attack of fever and on the 26th his illness was regarded as serious. On the 27th one of the Calcutta doctors was called in for consultation who along with Dr. Benson the Durbar Surgeon examined the royal patient and discovered that the disease from which His Highness was suffering was the insidious throat-disease Diphtheria. The malady was a serious one and all remedies to check its course were of no avail and the Maharaja passed away on the morning of the 28th surrounded by the members of his family, a number of State officials and a large number of followers.

The Dewan Sir K. Seshadri Iyer immediately communicated the sad news of the Maharaja's death to the Foreign Secretary, Sir William Cunningham, who in the days of the British Commission had served in Mysore as Secretary to the Chief Commissioner and had known the Maharaja from his boyhood. Lord Elgin was shocked by the news when it was conveyed to him and immediately issued instructions for postponing a visit to him of the Maharaja of Kapurthala fixed for that day. The Foreign Secretary and an aid-de-camp Captain Pollen were immediately deputed to convey the condolences of the Viceroy to the members of the bereaved family and, needless to say, they found the Maharani and the children overwhelmed with sorrow.

It was at first proposed that the Maharaja's body should be taken to Benares for cremation, but on the advice of Gurudas Banerji, Judge of the Calcutta High Court, it was settled that the cremation was to be at Kalighat on the banks of the Ganges. Various preparations had to be made and it was nearly six o'clock in the evening by the time the funeral cortege reached Kalighat.

The Foreign Secretary and Captain Pollen accompanied the procession as well as the Dewan and an aid-de-camp of the Maharaja of Kapurthala. On either side of all the roads on which the funeral procession passed, crowds of people were assembled expressing the greatest sorrow for the sudden and untimely death of the Maharaja whom they had seen only two years before in radiant health. At Kalighat the last funeral rites were performed by the deceased Maharaja's brother-in-law Bakshi Basappaji Urs on behalf of the two sons Princes Krishnaraja Wodeyar and Narasimharaja Wodeyar who were both of tender years.

The next day a message reached the Maharani from the Viceroy that the eldest son Krishnaraja Wodeyar was recognised as successor to the deceased Maharaja and that till the form of administration was settled, the Dewan Sir Seshadri Iyer was to carry on the daily administration of the State with the advice of the British Resident and as far as possible in consultation with the Maharani's wishes. On the 30th December the Maharani and the children with all the retinue left Calcutta, the Foreign Secretary and Captain Pollen taking leave of them at the Railway-Station.

In the meanwhile, Colonel Henderson the British Resident who had been immediately apprised by the Foreign Secretary of the sad event that had taken place, sent instructions by wire from Bangalore to the Controller of the Palace at Mysore to place seals on the doors of all the important apartments in the Palace and reached Mysore the next day with T. R. A. Thumboo Chetty who was then in temporary charge of the Dewan's duties. The Resident in announcing to the people of Mysore who had assembled in the Palace Square the sad intelligence of the Maharaja's death spoke as follows:—"It is with feelings of the profoundest sorrow that I have to communicate formally to those assembled here that the distressing intelligence has been received by telegram of the sudden and untimely death of His Highness the Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar Bahadur, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, which melancholy event took place at Calcutta yesterday at 7 a.m. This is not a suitable occasion for the expression of the sorrow which these

grievous tidings must cause not only in Mysore but throughout all India and even beyond wherever the name of your beloved sovereign is known. I am indeed come among you accompanied by my friend Mr. Thumboo Chetty, the Senior Member of the Council who has been left in temporary charge of the administration of the country, to exhort to you to exercise for the present all possible self-control in the expression of those very natural emotions called forth by this grievous intelligence and to urge all those present, relatives of His Highness and the civil and military officers of the State, to do their best to allay any excitement or apprehension that may possibly be caused by the news of the melancholy event. You are aware that the succession to the administration has been settled by the 3rd Article of the Instrument of Transfer and in due course the formal recognition of His Excellency the Viceroy and the Governor-General to the succession as therein provided will be received and the necessary arrangements made after the Subaswikaram ceremony. You must also be aware that under the same Instrument arrangements for the administration of the country have been definitely laid down, so that all apprehensions of any change in the policy of the Government of India towards Mysore may be at once dismissed as baseless. The deep interest ever shown by the Government of India in the welfare of Mysore and the friendly relations that ever existed with the illustrious Ruler whose loss we have now occasion to deplore are a sufficient guarantee that the best possible arrangements will be made for the administration of the country and for the welfare of all classes of the people."

There was great mourning throughout the State and all public offices and courts were closed for eight days. Thirty-two minute guns were fired in Bangalore and Mysore and all flags kept at half-mast till the ceremony on the twelfth day was completed.

The Maharani and the children reached Mysore on the 3rd January 1895 and at once drove to the Palace from the Railway-Station in the midst of crowds of people whose grief expressed itself in loud lamentations. Messages and letters of condolence reached the bereaved family from all parts of India as well as from outside

where His Highness' reputation as a beneficent ruler had reached. A message was also received from the Queen-Empress expressing her sorrow for the bereavement. On the 5th of the same month the inhabitants of Mysore presented through the Dewan a written representation to the Maharani expressing their sorrow for the unexpected death of their ruler and wishing that Her Highness during the minority of her young son should fill the place of the departed Maharaja and rule them till the minority terminated.

Chamaraja Wodeyar left five children surviving him at the time of his death—three daughters and two sons ranging from 14 to 6 years. The present Maharaja was only 10 years old at the time and the present Yuvaraja Narasimharaja Wodeyar only six.

In his address to the Representative Assembly that met in October 1895 the Dewan Sir K. Seshadri Iyer referred in these terms to the loss the country had sustained by the death of Chamaraja Wodeyar: "Our late sovereign passed away in the prime of life and in the midst of a most beneficent career. His untimely death was lamented as a great national misfortune throughout India; it evoked feelings of widespread sympathy in England; it was deplored as an imperial loss by the British Government. For us, his subjects, whose good always occupied the foremost place in his heart, it is impossible to cease to bemoan our great loss. Time cannot assuage our sorrow. The many monuments of his rule will ever remind us of the nobility of his character and the beneficence of his aims."

Later, to perpetuate the memory of Chamaraja Wodeyar an equestrian statue by Onslow Ford was placed in the Lal Bagh at Bangalore. A marble statue was also placed subsequently before the north-gate of the fort at Mysore and a similar one in the Cubbon Park at Bangalore. At the place of cremation in Calcutta a brindavan has been erected and a dharmasala also established, where gifts of grain are given to the people daily.