

## CHAPTER XXI.

### The Maharani—Regent.

**Maharani appointed Regent—Reformed State Council—  
Sir Seshadri Iyer continued as Dewan—Visits of Lord  
Elgin and Lord Curzon.**

The Proclamation read by the British Resident Col. Henderson did not quite relieve the anxiety of the people of Mysore as to the future of their State during the minority of their young Maharaja. There was an eager wish, as we have already seen, on the part of the people that the Maharani should for the time being take the place of the deceased ruler on behalf of her son. It took, however, some time for the Government of India to announce definitely the *ad interim* arrangements made for the administration of the country and to give relief to the minds of the people. The coronation of the young Maharaja was fixed for the 1st February following at which Col. Henderson the British Resident was present. On this occasion a Khareetha addressed by the Viceroy to the young Maharaja was read which contained the announcement that Her Highness the Maharani Kempananjammani Avaru had been appointed as Regent to carry on the administration during the minority of her son,—an announcement which was hailed with visible joy by all who were present at the time and accepted with sincere rejoicings everywhere by the people of the State.

It is only on rare occasions that women in India are called on to face situations such as the one that arose in Mysore. We have seen how Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni successfully fulfilled all the expectations formed of her during the minority of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. Maharani Kempananjammani equally rose to the occasion to worthily fill the gap which had been caused by the untimely and unexpected demise of her illustrious consort, away from his home and surroundings in the distant city of Calcutta. The Maharani though thus suddenly bereft of her beloved partner in life was fortunately found to possess an extraordinary degree of mental courage, and it is stated that when Sir William Cunningham,

the Foreign Secretary, offered condolences on behalf of the Government of India, Her Highness judiciously replied that it appeared to her as if the Maharaja had proceeded to Calcutta to personally entrust his family and his State to the special care of the Paramount Power. In October 1895, when Sir K. Seshadri Iyer in his address to the Representative Assembly gave expression to the sentiment that in their great affliction they had the consolation to know that the illustrious consort of their departed Maharaja was with them to guide and to encourage them in the task of administration, and that stricken with sorrow though she was, yet Her Highness had with exemplary self-denial placed the prestige of her great name, her rare intelligence and her great heart at the disposal of her loving subjects by consenting to preside over the administration of the country as Regent of the State, that sentiment found a ready echo in the hearts of all present on the occasion. An old and respectable Mahomedan representative member who was present at the time was overheard to remark: "Hakdarka huk hai; Usme Kya farrak"—it was but the claimant's right and there was no departure there."

Nevertheless, it must be confessed that here and there some misgivings were felt as to the wisdom of placing the Maharani in the void caused by the death of her distinguished husband. To her own subjects, the Maharani was known as the worthy spouse of their beloved sovereign and the mother of a happy group of children. To the outside world, she was known as an enlightened lady who had lent the weight of her name to an institution at Mysore for the education of girls. The Government of India knew her as the holder of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India which had been conferred on Her Highness in 1893. Outside the Palace precincts these items constituted the sum-total of knowledge regarding the new Regent and even this knowledge was mostly based on report inasmuch as only very few who could judge of her merits had the privilege of knowing her by sight. Fortunately the result proved that these misgivings were baseless and it was the good fortune of Mysore to find in the Maharani a ruler who possessed much tact and intelligence.

A few days after the installation of the young Maharaja, the new administration assumed its full form. Sir K. Seshadri Iyer was continued as Dewan and to assist him and the Maharani-Regent an Executive Council of three whole-time members was formed with T. R. A. Thumboo Chetty, P. N. Krishna Murthi who was a Judge of the Chief Court and Abdul Rahaman who was a Deputy Commissioner. During Chamaraja Wodeyar's reign although there existed a council, it had played no effective part in the administration of the State. So far back as April 1886 Thumboo Chetty had drawn the attention of Sir Seshadri Iyer to the need of improving the constitution of the Council so as to make it really a useful institution. But the latter had contented himself by replying that the real difficulty was about finding the men. His own words were:—"The ministry in your memo must be an Executive Council. I shall only be delighted to have such a Council. Where are the men? Never mind the cost which really is only a subordinate matter....."

The Government of India however, after Chamaraja Wodeyar's death, considered that there was need for a strong Council and the rules of business of the re-constituted Council were accordingly revised. The subjects which were to be laid before the Council were more precisely defined than in the notification issued in 1881. The list of subjects contained in that notification was found so vague as possibly to afford opportunities to a member to unduly hamper the Dewan by pressing for submission to the Council all kinds of insignificant questions and hence the subjects were more exactly defined. In the revised list of subjects were also now included all questions relating to the appointment of officers to the upper grades of the Civil Service in all its branches, which the Government of India considered, should be matters for the consideration of the whole Council. The Dewan-in-Council was to distribute the work of the State by departments between himself and the three councillors. The member in charge of a department was competent to dispose of all ordinary work of that department and to issue orders in the name of the Government, referring however matters of doubt, delicacy or importance to the Dewan and it was within the sphere of the Dewan to determine whether

final orders could be issued or not without reference to the Council as a whole. It was at all times open to the Dewan to refer any matter to the Council. The decisions of the Dewan-in-Council were to be carried into effect where there was no difference of opinion, but where the Dewan did not agree in any opinion with the majority of the Council, power was given to him to refer the matter to the Regent for her orders. It was also made incumbent on the Dewan to refer to the Resident all matters which had to go up to the Government of India. The Dewan also possessed the right to call for the production of any public records from any of the departments assigned to a member of the Council for re-consideration in the Council.

The Palace arrangements and the Civil List expenditure were entirely placed in the hands of the Maharani-Regent. The purdah which according to custom Her Highness observed proved no bar to her desire to acquaint herself with the wants and wishes of her subjects. Her Highness readily granted interviews to the British Resident, to her ministers and to the leading officers of the State and invited them to discuss with her important questions that concerned the prosperity of the country.

Lord and Lady Elgin paid a visit to the country in November 1895 and so did Lord and Lady Curzon in November 1900.