

CHAPTER XXV.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

**Maharaja's visit to Delhi for the Coronation Durbar—
Opens the Madras Exhibition and visits Lord Ampthill,
Governor of Madras—Tours in the State—Yuvaraja's illness
at Ajmer—Visits of Lord Kitchner and H. R. H. the Prince
of Wales—Birthday and Dasara Festivities.**

On the 1st January 1903 the Maharaja took part in the historic functions of the great Durbar at Delhi to celebrate the event in India of the accession of Edward VII to the throne as successor to Queen Victoria. A Mysore camp was formed at a distance of about six miles from the fort with a large party of officials and other guests who accompanied the Maharaja. The Imperial Service troops took part in the Coronation manœuvres and earned the encomiums of the British military department for their smart turn-out, soldierly bearing and excellent behaviour. In the State itself durbars were held at all district headquarters and other places at which proclamations in English and Kanada announcing His Majesty Edward VII's accession to the throne as King of England and Emperor of India were read to the assembled people. School sports and illuminations and fireworks formed parts of the programme. Divine worship was conducted in all temples and mosques and there was a general feeding of the poor of all classes. A large number of prisoners were released in honour of the occasion.

In December 1903 the Maharaja proceeded to Madras in response to a request to open the Industrial and Arts Exhibition got up there. On the 22nd of that month the citizens of Madras received His Highness at the Railway Station with an address of welcome, and in reply, the Maharaja while expressing genuine pleasure at meeting so many of the leading citizens of that great city, conveyed the assurance to them that his earnest desire was to uphold the great traditions of the State and to do what in him lay to maintain for Mysore that position in the Indian polity which they were good

enough to assign to it. On the 25th the Exhibition was opened by His Highness and the following extracts from his speech on the occasion indicate some of his views:—"Here, in India, the problem is peculiar. Our trade tends steadily to expand and it is possible to demonstrate by means of statistics the increasing prosperity of the country generally. On the other hand, we in India know that the ancient handicrafts are decaying, that the fabrics for which India was renowned in the past are supplanted by the products of Western looms, and that our industries are not displaying that renewed vitality which will enable them to compete successfully in the home or the foreign market. The cultivator on the margin of subsistence remains a starveling cultivator, the educated man seeks Government employment or the readily available profession of a lawyer, while the belated artisan works on the lines marked out for him by his forefathers for a return that barely keeps body and soul together. It is said that India is dependent on agriculture and must always remain so. That may be so; but there can, I venture to think, be little doubt that the solution of the ever recurring famine problem is to be found not merely in the improvement of agriculture, the cheapening of loans, or the more equitable distribution of taxation, but still more in the removal from the land to industrial pursuits of a great portion of those, who, at the best, gain but a miserable subsistence, and on the slightest failure of the season are thrown on public charity. It is time for us in India to be up and doing; new markets must be found, new methods adopted and new handicrafts developed, whilst the educated unemployed, no less than the skilled and unskilled labourers, all those, in fact, whose precarious means of livelihood is a standing menace to the well-being of the State must find employment in reorganised and progressive industries..... It seems to me that what we want is more outside light and assistance from those interested in industries. Our schools should not be left entirely to officials who are either fully occupied with their other duties or whose ideas are prone, in the nature of things, to run in official grooves. I should like to see all those who "think" and "know" giving us their active assistance and not merely their criticism of our results. It is not Governments or forms of

Government that have made the great industrial nations, but the spirit of the people and the energy of one and all working to a common end."

Early in January following, the Maharaja paid a visit to Lord Ampthill, then Governor of Madras. Sir Evan Machonochie gives in his book the following description of this visit :—" I remember being much struck with the attitude of the crowd as we drove in state. On such occasions an Indian crowd is impassive and the progress of a Governor usually excites no more than a dull curiosity. With a Maharaja the scene is very different. To gaze on his auspicious countenance brings good luck. Every face is eager, animated and smiling and the babies are held up in their mothers' arms to share in the blessings diffused by the divinity of his presence."

The first tour undertaken by the Maharaja within the limits of the State after he assumed power was in November 1904. On the 18th of that month His Highness left his Palace at Mysore soon after 9 a.m. in semi-state with escort and drove to the toll-bar on the Bannur road. Here a motor car was waiting and His Highness and the Yuvaraja with two others of the party started shortly after 10 o'clock. Rapid travelling was impracticable owing to the numerous pandals erected all along the road by the inhabitants of the adjoining villages and the throngs of people that were gathered to catch a sight of His Highness. The Maharaja stopped at a number of places on the way where he conversed with officials and others. Outside Gargeshwari a deputation was present of the Sri Vyasraya Mutt at Sosalé closeby with the insignias of the institution and an address of welcome. At Tirumakudlu the Maharaja was received by the district officers and by the important local people. His Highness then embarked on a raft with a very carefully designed canopy and was conveyed across the junction of the Kaveri and Kapila rivers to the steps of the Gunja Narasimha Swamy temple at T-Narsipur. The scene during the crossing was, it is stated, most striking. Thousands of people from all the country round had collected and filled the river, wading up to the waist and deeper to get a glimpse of the Maharaja. The insignias

of the Lingayat and other communities were also displayed and the whole distance between between the Mysore road and the temple was paced with a surging crowd, jostling and splashing but immensely good-humoured and most anxious to lend a hand at the raft. The high banks on the Narsipur side were hidden by sight-seers offering a most enthusiastic welcome.

A pandal had been erected in the temple precincts where His Highness received addresses from the T-Narsipur Municipality and inhabitants of the taluk and acknowledged them briefly in Kanada. In the afternoon a visit was paid to the Hoysala temple at Somnathpur, some 4 miles along the Bannur road on the north side of the Kaveri. After returning to camp, His Highness visited in the evening the temples on either side of the junction, when the river banks and bed and adjoining buildings were illuminated effectively.

On the morning of the 19th November His Highness left T-Narsipur on horseback and reached Nanjangud at about 10-30 a.m. As on the previous day, pandals were much in evidence all along the route, at each of which short halts were made. Outside the town of Nanjangud a deputation from the Sri Raghavendraswamy Mutt and the temple received His Highness and numerous pandals along the streets of the town testified to the loyalty of the inhabitants. In a pandal in the Bazaar Chowk, His Highness received an address from the Municipality enclosed in a silver casket and acknowledged it in a short reply. The members of the Municipality and of the Representative Assembly, the local officials, legal practitioners and leading merchants were then introduced to His Highness. In the afternoon His Highness visited some of the local offices and institutions and the evening closed with fireworks and illuminations. On the 20th the party left Nanjangud in the morning and taking the road to Gundlupet turned from Begur to Hediyaal where a shooting camp had been formed. The next day His Highness and the Yuvaraja returned to Mysore.

In subsequent years His Highness made trips to various places Ajmer, Calcutta, Bombay, Kashmir, Simla, Badrinath,

Mount Kailas. The trip to Ajmer was in connection with the illness of His Highness' brother the Yuvaraja who was studying at the Mayo College. On receiving news that the Yuvaraja had an attack of typhoid, the Maharaja started off at a moment's notice with his mother and his durbar physician. Happily, all ended well and the patient recovered and returned to Mysore. The Maharaja and the members of his family were however not so fortunate in the case of the second princess Narasarajammanni who passed away while still young after a long illness in November 1904 and the whole country mingled its sorrow with that of the members of the Royal Family.

The earliest visitor to the Maharaja after his accession to power was Lord Kitchner, the brilliant British General and Commander-in-Chief of the Indian forces. In April 1904 he visited Mysore and inspected the Imperial Service Regiment and the Transport Corps of the State.

In January and February 1906 Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales (subsequently known as George V and Queen Mary) paid a visit to the State. They were warmly welcomed everywhere with spontaneous demonstrations of joy and devotion by all classes of people in the State. To afford the august visitors an opportunity to see the products of the arts and industries of the State and its resources as well, an Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition was held at Mysore. Their Royal Highnesses paid a visit to it and evinced considerable interest in the exhibits. The Prince of Wales also laid the foundation-stone of the Chamarajendra Technical Institute at Mysore, and at Bangalore he unveiled the statue raised to the memory of Her late Majesty the Queen-Empress Victoria.

At the banquet in honour of the Prince and Princess of Wales on the 30th January 1906 the Maharaja said:—"The fortunes of Mysore will ever be associated in history with the consolidation of the British Power in India. It was in Mysore that the great Duke of Wellington received his baptism of fire and won his first laurels. It was with the aid of the Mysore Horse and the Transport that he gained imperishable fame on the battle fields of the Deccan. In

the horsemen who now have the greatly-prized honour of forming your escort and personal guard, Your Royal Highnesses see the descendants of the men who fought at Seringapatam and in the Deccan. Of the efficiency of my Imperial Service troops, it is not for me to say more than that one and all have worked their hardest to fit themselves for the front line of the army of the Empire. But of their spirit I dare affirm that the one ambition of every officer and man is to emulate the valour of his ancestors in the service of His Majesty the King-Emperor. I beg Your Royal Highness to convey to His Gracious Majesty the assurance that whenever the call may come, Mysore will not be found wanting."

The Birthday and the Dasara festivities now assumed their old splendour even in a larger degree than they possessed in the days of His Highness' father and of his grand-father. On these occasions large numbers of European and Indian guests are usually invited and larger and larger crowds of people are attracted to the capital to witness the sports and gaieties taking place at the time. On occasions of his Birthday the Maharaja goes to the Government House in procession through some of the main streets and there His Highness is welcomed by his European guests. At night His Highness returns to the Palace in grand procession. Polo tournaments, lawn tennis matches and various other sports are also combined with horse racing during this period.

Occasion may be taken here to mention that Sir S. M. Fraser the former Tutor of the Maharaja returned to Mysore in the capacity of British Resident in 1905 and when he proposed the toast of His Highness at the Birthday Banquet held on the 15th June 1908, the Maharaja gave expression to these sentiments:—
 "I find some difficulty in responding adequately to the more than generous terms in which you, Sir, have proposed my health, but if I am tempted to ascribe some measure of your appreciation to the partiality of an old friend, it is none the less gratifying to me to learn that the hospitality of Mysore is so warmly recognised by my friends. There are, however, two references in your speech to which I can respond without reserve. As you truly observe, my lamented father established a tradition of personal regard and,

indeed affection, between the Ruler of Mysore and his European friends and that tradition I regard it as my duty and my privilege to maintain. In the second place, you have referred to the peculiar relation in which Mysore stands with regard to the Government and officers of the Paramount Power. This relation stands on the solid basis of benefit conferred on the one hand and as I am proud to maintain, justified on the other. The friendship thus begun has been confirmed and cemented by the closest and most cordial intercourse at work and at play, in fair weather and in foul, for more than one hundred years. That these relations may ever be continued is, I can assure you, the earnest desire of Mysore and its Ruler."

The celebration of the Dasara first began, as we know, in the days of Raja Wodeyar, one of His Highness' ancestors in the beginning of the 17th century. This festival opens on the first day of Aswija (September or October) and annually attracts to the Mysore City multitudes of people both from inside and outside the State as well as a number of European and other visitors interested in the social and artistic aspects of the occasion. Vijayadasami or victory day is the name given to the last day of the Dasara, while the preceding nine days are designated Navaratri or Nine Nights. On the morning of the first day of the festival His Highness goes to Chamundi Thotti where all the religious functions of the Palace take place. An image of the family goddess is here installed. On this occasion His Highness appears before the image wearing a special vesture and also a Kankanam or bangle sacred to the goddess. This bangle is not removed nor does His Highness leave the Palace until the first nine days of the festival are completed. Following the traditions of his ancestors, the Maharaja daily in the evening sits on the throne in view of the public and in the open space in front of the Palace a programme of musical drills and other displays is gone through. To the durbar on the ninth day, European guests are invited and are received with appropriate formalities usual on such occasions, while the latter return to the Maharaja the usual civilities. The Resident is seated in a chair of state on His Highness' right, while the other European guests are seated in long rows on the same side. On the left are seated

members of the Ruling Family, Arasu noblemen, State officers and other invitees. His Highness seated on the golden throne and wearing magnificent jewels is the gorgeous centre of a brilliant scene. At the close of the scene the guests bow in front of the throne and each lady is handed by the Maharaja a bouquet and a small bottle of scent.

On the tenth day the Maharaja goes in full State procession to the Banni Mantap (so designated in memory of the Banni tree on which the Pandavas are said to have deposited their arms during the year of their obligatory concealment) situated at some distance to the north of the city. On the morning of this day the State sword is placed in a palanquin and sent to the Banni Mantap along with the State horse and the State elephant. The great procession takes place late in the afternoon through the streets packed with dense crowds of sight-seers on both sides. The Maharaja sits in a golden howdah carried on the back of a magnificent elephant. At Banni Mantap a parade is held just after sunset. After the parade, His Highness performs Puja (worship) before the State sword and the Banni tree. The sword, the elephant and the horse are then sent back to the Palace. His Highness follows them in a magnificent procession illuminated at one time by torch lights which have given place now to bright electric lights.