

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

**Anniversary of Queen Victoria's Proclamation—
Visit of Lord and Lady Minto to the State—Death of
Edward VII—Accession to the throne of George V—
Coronation Durbar at Delhi.**

On the 2nd November 1908 the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's historic Proclamation of 1858 issued after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny was celebrated throughout the State, and durbars were held at all district headquarter towns and the Royal Proclamation was read to all the assembled citizens in English and in the vernaculars. In commemoration of the event, the poor were fed and clothed and sports and treats arranged for school children. The following message of His Majesty the King-Emperor to the Princes and People of India was reprinted in the official Gazette in English and Kanada and copies of the same were widely distributed in the State:—"It is now fifty years since Queen Victoria, my Beloved Mother and my August Predecessor on the Throne of these Realms, for divers weighty reasons, with the advice and consent of Parliament, took upon herself the Government of the territories theretofore administered by the East India Company. I deem this a fitting anniversary on which to greet the Princes and peoples of India in commemoration of the exalted task then solemnly undertaken. Half a century is but a brief span in your long annals; yet this half century that ends to-day will stand amid the floods of your historic ages, a far-shining land-mark. The Proclamation of the direct supremacy of the Crown sealed the unity of Indian Government and opened a new era. The journey was arduous and the advance may have sometimes seemed slow; but the incorporation of many strangely diversified communities and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control, has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half century with clear gaze and good conscience.

“Difficulties such as attend all human rule in every age and place have risen up from day to day. They have been faced by the servants of the British Crown with toil and courage and patience, with deep counsel and a resolution that has never faltered nor shaken. If errors have occurred, the agents of my Government have spared no pains and no self-sacrifice to correct them; if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy.

“No secret of empire can avert the scourge of drought and plague, but experienced administrators have done all that skill and devotion are capable of doing to mitigate those dire calamities of nature. For a longer period than was ever known in your land before, you have escaped the dire calamities of war within your borders. Internal peace has been unbroken.

“In the great Charter of 1858, Queen Victoria gave you noble assurance of her earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the Government for the benefit of all resident therein. The schemes that have been diligently framed and executed for promoting your material convenience and advance—schemes unsurpassed in their magnitude and their boldness—bear witness before the world to the zeal with which that benignant promise has been fulfilled.

“The rights and privileges of the Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs have been respected, preserved and guarded; and the loyalty of their allegiance has been unswerving. No man among my subjects has been favoured, molested, or disquieted by reason of his religious belief or worship. All men have enjoyed protection of the law. The law itself has been administered without disrespect to creed or caste, or to usages and ideas rooted in your civilization; it has been simplified in form and its machinery adjusted to the requirements of ancient communities slowly entering a new world.

“The charge confided to my Government concerns the destinies of countless multitudes of men now and for ages to come;

and it is a paramount duty to repress with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim. These conspiracies I know to be abhorrent to the loyal and faithful character of the vast hosts of my Indian subjects, and I will not suffer them to turn me aside from my task of building up the fabric of security and order.

“Unwilling that this historic anniversary should pass without some signal mark of Royal clemency and grace, I have directed that, as was ordered on the memorable occasion of the Coronation Durbar in 1903, the sentences of persons whom our Courts have duly punished for offences against the law should be remitted or in various degrees reduced; and it is my wish that such wrong-doers may remain mindful of this act of mercy and may conduct themselves without offence henceforth.

“Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens, and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

“From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended. Important classes among you representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship and greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power. Administration will be all the more efficient, if the officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of regular contact with those whom it affects and with those who influence and reflect common opinion about it. I will not speak of the measures that are now being diligently framed for these objects. They will speedily be made known to you and will, I am very confident, mark a notable stage in the beneficent progress of your affairs.

“I recognise the valour and fidelity of my Indian troops, and at the New Year I have ordered that opportunity should be taken to show in substantial form this, my high appreciation, of their martial instincts, their splendid discipline, and their faithful readiness of service.

“The welfare of India was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me, ever since my visit in 1875, the interests of India, its Princes and peoples have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear son the Prince of Wales and the Princess of Wales returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content. These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of my Royal House and line only represent, and they do most truly represent, the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this Kingdom.

“May Divine protection and favour strengthen the wisdom and mutual goodwill that are needed for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any state of Empire of recorded time.”

In November 1909 Lord and Lady Minto paid a visit to the State. During their stay of a fortnight they visited the celebrated Gersoppa Falls, the historic place of Seringapatam, the Kunigal Stud Farm and the Kolar Gold Fields. They also witnessed the Khedda operations for the capture of elephants at the Kakankote jungles. Their Excellencies met with a most loyal and enthusiastic welcome everywhere in the course of their visit.

At the banquet given in honour of his distinguished guest on the 25th November 1909, the Maharaja said:—“..... The four years which have elapsed since Your Excellency came to India have been years of strenuous work and grave anxiety. A wave of sedition and anarchy has swept over the Indian Empire, and the Government of India have had no light task in grappling with these insidious foes and maintaining that law and order which have always been the watch word of British rule in India.....

I can assure Your Excellency that the efforts of the Government of India to maintain its authority have always had my sincere sympathy and that I am and always have been ready to co-operate to the utmost of my power in furthering these efforts. Your Excellency needs no assurance of my own loyalty to the King-Emperor and as regards my people, I take this opportunity of publicly expressing my conviction that they are actuated by nothing but friendly feelings towards the British race and loyal sentiments towards the Paramount Power. Happily, therefore, it has not been necessary for my Government to adopt any repressive measures *except to arm ourselves, as a matter of precaution, with summary powers against a small but irresponsible section of the public press.....* Their existence is in itself sufficient to keep in check the evil against which they are aimed and I trust it may never be necessary to enforce them rigorously."

The Ophthalmic Hospital at Bangalore constructed later was named after Lord Minto in commemoration of his visit to the State.

The sad news of the demise of Edward VII was received in India on 7th May 1910 and caused great regret throughout the country as a powerful factor for the preservation of the peace of Europe was thereby lost. In announcing this great calamity which had befallen the empire, the Maharaja directed that all public offices, courts and schools in the State should be closed for five days from that date. All flags were ordered to be hoisted half-mast high and sixty-eight minute guns were fired at the Palaces at Mysore and Bangalore.

The Viceroy announced on 9th May 1910 that His Majesty King George V had been proclaimed King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of India and this was communicated to the people of Mysore on the same date under a salute of 101 guns. The Proclamation of His Majesty's accession to the throne and the declaration made by him subsequent to it was read at the Residency at Bangalore on the 12th May 1910 in the presence of the officers of the Mysore and British Governments and the principal citizens of the City and the Civil and Military Station,

The coronation of the King-Emperor was celebrated at Delhi on 12th December 1911 and in response to the invitation of the Viceroy the Maharaja was present at the Imperial Durbar held there. His Highness was accompanied by the Yuvaraja and by the principal officers and Sirdars of the State as well as a few leading non-official gentlemen. The great event was also celebrated throughout the State in a manner befitting the occasion.