

## CHAPTER III.

### Closing years of the British Commission.

The British Government after the demise of Krishnaraja Wodeyar became practically a trustee for the administration of the country on behalf of his successor the young Chamaraja Wodeyar and the Commission continued in power till March 1881, when the administration was transferred to the hands of the young Maharaja on the 25th of the same month. Bowring, as we have seen, resigned his appointment and left the country in February 1870 and in the interim between his departure and the restoration of the country to the Maharaja's rule there were three Chief Commissioners. The first was Colonel Richard Meade who was, prior to his appointment in Mysore, Agent to the Governor-General for the Central Indian States and whom the Earl of Mayo who had by this time succeeded Sir John Lawrence chose as the fittest person to administer the State of Mysore and in a letter addressed to him, dated 3rd February 1870, wrote: "In taking Mysore you have assumed a most interesting and responsible task which will require the exercise both of political and administrative duty of the highest importance. It is needless for me to recapitulate the relations under which the British Government now stands to that State. They are unique in India and though the fate of the State in future may be still uncertain, it is our duty to endeavour by every means in our power during the period in which it wholly remains in our hands to place every part of its administration upon a firm and efficient basis." In 1871 sub-divisions composed of groups of taluks were constituted and an Assistant Superintendent was placed in charge of each, the object being to bring the Government officers in closer communication with the people and to give the Assistant Superintendents a greater interest in their work.

The first step of preparing the State for administration by the natives of the country was taken in the time of Colonel Meade. In March 1873 the Government of India sanctioned a scheme for the appointment of a class of Attaches or probationers for the higher grades of the executive service of the State. These Attaches were

to be trained for permanent appointments in the Commission on giving proof of turning out to be good and efficient public servants. The persons selected for these posts were to be chosen from amongst the best educated youths belonging to the families of the State most entitled to consideration from their acknowledged position in the State or their eminent public services. The age limit for the Attaches was fixed at between 18 and 23 and the total number was limited to four for the time being. It was also laid down that no person appointed an Attache was to be retained in that post for more than two years, unless he was considered qualified for permanent employment. At the same time it was clearly expressed that there was no desire to abandon entirely the existing practice of promoting to the higher grades officials in the lower grades whose services and character merited special reward. The main object of the measure now initiated was to establish amongst the officers a higher tone than generally could be looked for from men who commenced their career in the smaller situations in which they had toiled for a long number of years and become accustomed to temptations on account of inadequate salaries often so damaging to one's character. In 1873 the designation of Commissioner was substituted for that of Superintendent through all the grades, the head of the administration having already been called Chief Commissioner in 1869. In the same year an important scheme for the establishment of Munsiff's courts with purely civil jurisdiction was brought into operation. The Amildars were relieved of their jurisdiction in civil cases and the judicial powers of other officers were greatly modified. The re-organisation of the police was commenced, one of the principal features of the scheme being the recognition of the village police and its utilisation after being placed on a reasonable footing of efficiency. The local military force was greatly improved by proper selection of men and horses and by the enforcement of a regular course of drill. Special training was provided for preparing native officers for the Public Works, Survey and Forest departments.

Meade was a true follower of Bowring and he not only supported the reforms which the latter had introduced but also developed them and extended them to various other branches of the

administration. Meade's views on what is called the Regulation System of Government contained in the Administration Report for 1872-73 are instructive: "There are some," he said, "who oppose every reform tending towards the introduction of a Regulation System on the ground that the administration may become too elaborate and that the system of Government usually termed Patriarchal is best adapted to a native State. These however are not the views which during the last ten years under the directions of the Government of India have actuated the administration..... The present Chief Commissioner believes that while over-elaboration in the system of Government cannot but be an evil as well in a native State as in British territory, the patriarchal system is even less adapted to a native State than to a province under the British rule, for the reason that those personal qualities in the ruler which can alone secure for such a system even a moderate and transient success are rarely possessed by the natives of India..... On the other hand, in these days of high education no difficulty will ever be experienced in procuring the services of native officers who are qualified to work any system however elaborate. Nor, if we examine the conditions of those States which are now governed by native rulers, do we find any tendency to allow subordinate officers to improvise any decisions for themselves unchecked by law, precedent, or central authority..... The patriarchal system in a native State is a synonym for anarchy and corruption and the most successful native States are those which strive to imitate a European model. The Chief Commissioner therefore believes that the closing years of British rule in Mysore should witness not disorganisation in the vain pursuit of a phantom system of native administration but a thorough consolidation of what has already been done to the end that the Province may be handed over to His Highness the Maharaja in perfect order."

In September 1873 Meade was called away to Baroda for a few months as the chairman of the committee appointed to enquire into and report upon the affairs of that State, which it was believed had become serious. He returned to Bangalore in March 1874 after this duty and in June following received the title of K.C.S.I.

He continued in Mysore till February 1875 when he was again required to go to Baroda as member of the committee which was to enquire into the charge against Malhar Rao, Gaekwar of Baroda, of attempting to poison the British Resident at his court.

During Sir Richard Meade's absence R. A. Dalzell of the Madras Civil Service who was at the time a member of the Viceroy's Council officiated for him. Meade though he finished his labours at Baroda by November following was not able to return to Mysore as he was transferred to Hyderabad as Resident by Lord Northbrook who had succeeded the Earl of Mayo who was assassinated in the Andamans by a prisoner there. C. B. Saunders then took Meade's place permanently as Chief Commissioner and continued in Mysore for two years and it was during his time that there occurred the great famine of Southern India which crippled the resources of the country and caused an appalling mortality among the people.

In the years 1875 and 1876 the monsoons had failed to give a sufficient quantity of rainfall as was needed for a normal harvest. The Mungar or the early rains of 1877 which fell as usual had raised hopes of a normal year. But the Hingar or the later rains disappointed these expectations and it became certain that measures were necessary to meet the grim spectre of famine. The surrounding Madras districts were also in the same plight. Even in the earlier period some attempts had been made to give help to the people by starting relief works in several parts of the State as well as by granting remissions of assessment. The State forests were thrown open for the grazing of cattle and a few other measures were also adopted. The only railway that existed in the State at the time was the one from Madras to Bangalore and although large quantities of grain were imported into the State, yet the want of adequate conveniences for internal transport stood in the way of affording relief to the stricken people when and where needed. In May 1877 there were 1,00,000 of people fed in relief kitchens and in August this number rose to 2,27,000, besides 60,000 employed on relief works paid in grain and the 20,000 on the railway to Mysore under construction.

Sir Richard Temple who afterwards became Governor of Bombay had been deputed as special Commissioner to co-operate with the Government in carrying out relief measures. Lord Lytton who had succeeded Lord Northbrook as Governor-General visited Mysore in September 1877 and finding that relief on a larger scale was needed sent a number of European officers from Northern India to cope with the distress. Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Elliot was appointed Famine Commissioner and Major (afterwards Sir Colin) Scott-Moncrieff, Chief Engineer. Copious rains however in the months of September and October brought joy to the stricken population and ultimately put an end to the famine, although relief works were not generally closed till November 1878. At this time a fund called the Mansion House Fund raised in London and to which contributions were generously made by the people in England afforded considerable support for the rehabilitation of the people who had suffered from the famine and for resuming their vocations. The Christian Missions and other private bodies took charge of a number of orphan children for whose upbringing the Government also gave large contributions.

Before the famine broke out, there was an invested Government surplus of Rs. 63 lakhs in the treasury. This amount was all spent and there came to be a debt of 80 lakhs of rupees due to the Government of India who advanced the money for meeting this calamity. The population also was reduced by about a million, not to speak of the appalling loss of cattle. The revenue collections which in the year before the famine stood at over Rs. 109 lakhs fell in 1876-77 to Rs. 82 lakhs and in 1877-78 to Rs. 69 lakhs.

At the close of the famine relief operations the Government at Calcutta while commending to the Secretary of State for India the services of the European officers also referred appreciatively to the services rendered by the native officials. "Especially those of a higher standing and superior education," said the Government of India, "laboured strenuously and successfully in relieving distress and in carrying into effect the instructions that had been issued for guidance in the conduct of relief operations."

Another event of importance of a pleasanter nature however that took place during Saunders' term of office was the proclaiming of the Queen of England as Empress of India. This event was fittingly celebrated in all parts of the Mysore State. The young Maharaja and Saunders who had both received invitations from the Viceroy attended the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi held on the 1st January 1877 which not only set the seal on India being a part of the British Empire but also opened the way for the establishment of a new political relationship between the British Government and the Native States of India.

In April 1878 J. D. Gordon (afterwards Sir James) succeeded Saunders as Chief Commissioner. Gordon belonged to the Bengal Civil Service and had been transferred to Mysore as Judicial Commissioner. In April 1878 he was appointed Chief Commissioner in succession to Saunders. It was in the early years of his period of office as Chief Commissioner that the Mysore Government undertook to construct for the first time a line of railway and this line was the one from Bangalore to Mysore, a distance of  $88\frac{1}{2}$  miles, begun as a famine relief work. So far back as 1871 this project had been thought of and an estimate prepared, but the Secretary of State had put off the proposal on the ground whether it was not preferable to spend money on irrigation works rather than on railways. When famine broke out in 1877, it became a necessity to start immediate relief works and among these were the banks and cuttings on the metre gauge of the suspended railway line from Bangalore to Mysore. By the time the famine operations ceased in October 1878 a sum of Rs. 7 lakhs had been spent, of which Rs. 4 lakhs worth of work was substantially available for the completion of the line. The cost of the line was estimated at about Rs. 60 lakhs. Gordon was strongly in favour of executing the project. But the main obstacle in the way was that the Mysore State was already under obligation to the Government of India to the extent of Rs. 80 lakhs spent in combating famine. The Chief Commissioner proposed that if the repayment of this debt was postponed he would be able to meet the cost of construction from the current revenues of the State. The Government of India however were more inclined to advance the cost from their own funds rather than allow the postpone-

ment of the repayment of the debt. Lord Cranbrooke who was then Secretary of State for India decided in May 1879 that the recovery of the debt might be postponed on condition of paying 5 per cent interest per annum on the amount till it was discharged and that the construction of the railway might be undertaken from the current revenues of the State. Subsequently an agreement was also concluded with the Madras Railway Company to extend their broad gauge line from the C. & M. Station terminus to the Bangalore City railway station, a distance of 3 miles.

The great famine of 1877-78 led to considerable unsettlement in the finances of the State. Bowring and Meade had both aimed at raising the standard of administration in Mysore to that prevailing in British India and they were averse to maintain large sums of surplus money in unfructifying reserve. Accordingly, much money had been spent on irrigation, on the employment of a large number of European officers on liberal salaries, on the formation of new departments, and on promotions to native officers. During the period that famine prevailed, necessarily a larger expenditure had to be incurred on mitigating its horrors. On the cessation of famine, therefore, it became clear that material reductions in expenditure could not be avoided and on J. D. Gordon the last Chief Commissioner fell not only the unpleasant task of introducing drastic cuts in State expenditure but also the imperative need of handing over to the young Maharaja's hands a fairly efficient system of administration.

To facilitate the reduction of the establishments, rules for the grant of liberal pensions and gratuities were temporarily promulgated and with the co-operation of C. V. Rangacharlu who had now been appointed Revenue Secretary to the Government of Mysore with the view of eventually being appointed Dewan, Gordon resolutely faced the situation. During the two years of famine 1876-78 there was a fall in revenue of 67 lakhs and the expenditure during these years exceeded the normal collections by about 66½ lakhs in consequence of the requirements of famine relief, so that the total deficit from diminished revenues and increased expenditure amounted to 133½ lakhs. Against this amount however was the

surplus invested in the Government securities which on sale realised a little over Rs. 61 lakhs, the rest being met from the loan advanced by the Government of India. While only 104 lakhs of rupees was budgetted as revenue for 1878-79, the actual collections amounted to 121 lakhs on account of the unexpectedly bountiful harvests of the year, coupled with the good prices which ruled, which enabled the ryots to pay large portions of the accumulated arrears of revenue. The expenditure however was 126 lakhs of rupees. Considerable reductions had therefore to be carried out in the expenditure of the several departments as it was no longer possible to keep up its old level. The Public Works grant was reduced by nearly one-half and the Irrigation Department was abolished as a separate branch and the provincial and local fund works were concentrated under one agency. The training of natives for posts in the D. P. W. had already begun by the establishment of an Engineering College and these trained men began gradually to take the place of the European officers at smaller cost. In the Judicial Department a native Civil and Sessions Judge on a salary of Rs. 1200 was substituted for the Commissioner on Rs. 2500 in the Nandidoorg Division and Judicial Assistants were called Subordinate Judges. Similar changes were also introduced in the two other divisions sometime later. For four of the districts out of eight native officers on lower pay were appointed as Deputy Commissioners and a reduction was also made in the number of Assistant Commissioners by the abolition of the subdivisions and of separate police Assistant Commissioners.

The coffee planters of Mysore held their lands under grant subject to an excise tax of Re. 1 per cwt. of coffee produced. In order to safeguard their interests on the administration being handed over to native rule, the Chief Commissioner proposed that each planter should have the option of choosing either a 30 years' settlement at Re. 1 per acre or a permanent settlement at Rs. 1½. The Government of India however vetoed the latter and the planters then accepted the 30 years' leases under protest. They however sought the intercession of the Secretary of State and an understanding was arrived at that on the transfer of the administration to the Maharaja there was to be no difficulty for the coffee

planters both European and native to obtain a permanent settlement of their holdings at a fixed acreage rate.

In 1878-1879 the Forest Department was abolished and the Conservator was transferred elsewhere, there remaining only three trained forest officers and the control was transferred to the Revenue Department.

Among the welcome legacies bequeathed by the British Commission to the future Maharaja's Government was 3750 miles of public road planted with trees on both sides at distances varying from 12 to 60 feet.