

CHAPTER I.

Retrospect of the growth of Mysore from Yaduraja to Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar.

The beginnings of modern Mysore may be dated from the fall of Seringapatam on the 4th of May 1799 to the British arms. Till then Seringapatam was not only a flourishing city of importance in Southern India but also had been the capital of a number of powerful rulers. It is now, however, a city of ruined ramparts and dilapidated houses with rank vegetation making the place malarial and unhealthy. Its population has dwindled from about a lakh and a half to a few thousands; still it must be admitted that this city of bygone glory has not lost its attraction to the numerous visitors who continue to frequent it in all parts of the year. To the Hindus, it is a place of pilgrimage where they have a bath in the sacred river Kaveri and where they visit the holy shrine of God Sri Ranganatha. To the Mussalmans, it is a place where once Tippu Sultan, the Tiger of Mysore, ruled, where the two minarets of the great mosque built by him still continue to dominate over the ruined city and the surrounding country, where is situated the great Mausoleum in which the remains of Tippu and of his parents lie buried and where people of the Mussalman faith annually gather to mourn over the destiny which befell Tippu Sultan and to recall to their minds the heroism which he displayed even in his last moments. To the British, it is a place which reminds them of the daring feats performed by their countrymen against great odds, sending a thrill through their minds as they witness the vestiges which still remain of those feats.

Seringapatam first rose to importance in the year 1495, when it became the seat of the viceroys of the Vijayanagar kings. After the battle of Talikota in 1565 when a great disaster befell the Vijayanagar king, Rama Raja, at the hands of his Mahomedan neighbours of Bijapur, his successors were unable to maintain the vigour of their hold over their distant feudatories and dependants. Among such feudatories was the celebrated Raja Wodeyar I, ninth in succession from the romantic and chivalrous Yadava prince,

Yaduraja, who rescued the daughter of the Mysore Chief from the unwelcome alliance with Maranayaka of Karagahalli, a petty palegar, and became the founder of the present Ruling family by chivalrously marrying the princess himself. Many interesting events relating to the career of Raja Wodeyar are mentioned in the Palace chronicles on which Wilks, the first English historian of Mysore, has based his account of this period of Mysore history. Raja Wodeyar was born in the year 1552 and came to rule the Mysore country in 1578 A.D. in place of his elder brother Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar who retired to private life and proceeded to reside at Terakanambi in the Gundlupet taluk. The first act of Raja Wodeyar on succeeding his brother was to break the power of his kinsman Virarajaiya of Karagahalli who was insolently parading himself in a palanquin with music and attendants and to annex Karagahalli and the villages dependent on it. Raja Wodeyar next defied the authority of Sri Rangaraya, the Vijayanagar viceroy at Seringapatam, by refusing to comply with his summons to go to his help for meeting an invasion of his country by Venkatapathiraya of Madura. Sri Rangaraya, later, called on his kinsman, the palegar of Ummathur, to punish Raja Wodeyar for his refractoriness, but the latter meeting the Ummathur army at a place called Kesare totally routed it and put it to flight. Next, hearing that the chiefs of Belur, Grama, Mugur, Yelandur and of some other places had formed a combination against the Vijayanagar viceroy and fearing that danger to Mysore might arise if this combination was left unchecked, Raja Wodeyar met the combined chiefs at Kunigal, defeated them in battle and dispersed their armies. On another occasion, Raja Wodeyar learnt that while the Senapathi or the commander-in-chief of the Vijayanagar king was proceeding on a visit to the viceroy at Seringapatam, he was captured by the chief of Holè-Narsipur and kept in confinement. Raja Wodeyar proceeded with an army and rescued the Senapathi and sent him on to Seringapatam. For this service, Raja Wodeyar was rewarded with the grant of an estate or territory adjacent to Bannur and Sosalé in the present Thirumkudlu-Narsipur taluk of the Mysore District.

The most remarkable and far-reaching event, however, in the time of Raja Wodeyar was the incorporation of Seringapatam and

the territories dependent on it with his own. The causes that brought about this event are obscure, and it can only be conjectured that Sri Rangaraya taking into account the unusual talents of Raja Wodeyar and on being afflicted with carbuncle in his old age made a virtue of necessity and on the pretence of allowing Raja Wodeyar to govern for him during his absence, went and settled at Malangi near Talkad where, shortly after, he died. Thenceforth Seringapatam became the capital of the Mysore Kingdom and continued to be so till 1799, when after the death of Tippu, the British retained the island in their own possession as a reminder of their conquest. Raja Wodeyar from the time of his occupation of Seringapatam extended his dominions on all sides. Among his conquests after this date may be mentioned Sargoor in the Heggadadevanakote taluk, Ramasamudra and Hardnahalli in the Chamarajanagar taluk, Mugur in the T-Narasipur taluk and Kikkeri and Hosaholalu in the Krishnarajpet taluk.

The policy of Raja Wodeyar was remarkable, as expressed by Wilks, for the rigour and severity which he exercised towards his subordinate Wodeyars and for the indulgence he showed towards the ryots. These petty wodeyars were generally dispossessed of the territories in their possession and kept at the seat of Government with a pecuniary allowance, while the ryots were reconciled to the change by levy from them of no larger sums than they had been accustomed to pay previously. After he took possession of Seringapatam, Raja Wodeyar seated himself on the throne of the Vijayanagar viceroy and celebrated the Dasara festival with adequate pomp and pageantry. Worn down by his ceaseless activities, Raja Wodeyar died in the year 1617 A.D. and was the first sovereign of Mysore to impress upon his contemporaries that the Ruling family of Mysore was a factor to be taken account of.

The next great name among the successors of Raja Wodeyar I is that of Kanthirava Narasimha Raja Wodeyar, twelfth in succession from Yaduraja. Before he became king, Kanthirava was living at a place called Terakanambi in the present Gundlupet taluk with his father Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar who yielded place, as already stated, to Raja Wodeyar I. Kanthirava was a

prince of great courage, bodily strength and mental vigour. Even before he ascended the throne, he had established a record for intrepidity and heroism by going in disguise to Trichnopoly and challenging and slaying a champion wrestler who had insolently hung up his nether garments at one of the gates of the fort inviting all and sundry either to acknowledge his superiority by passing underneath those garments or in the alternative, to engage in combat with him. Kanthirava became king in 1638 and shortly after, resenting the insolent behaviour towards him of Vikramaraya who was then Dalavoy or Commander-in-chief of the troops and learning also that his predecessor Immadi Raja Wodeyar, the son of Raja Wodeyar I had been poisoned by him, put Vikramaraya to death and appointed a person named Thimmappa Naik as the head of the royal forces.

About this time, there happened to be enmity between Hanumappa Naik of Basavapatna and Virabhadra Naik of Ikkeri, both in the present Shimoga district. The former sought the help of the Bahamani king of Bijapur to subjugate the latter. The Bijapur king learning from one Nagamangala Chenniah, a fugitive army-commander of Jagadeva Raya of Chennapatna, that the new king of Mysore had injudiciously put Vikarmaraya to death and thereby had become obnoxious to his people, sent a large army commanded by one of his able generals, Ranadulla Khan by name, first, to help Hanumappa Naik against the chief of Ikkeri and then to march towards Seringapatam to subjugate Kanthirava Narasimha Raja Wodeyar. All efforts made by Ranadulla Khan against the Seringapatam fort as well as the fort at Mysore were unavailing and Kanthirava had the satisfaction of putting Ranadulla Khan and his army to flight. Further efforts of two other Bijapur generals equally proved unavailing and Kanthirava's fame spread all around as a great warrior. He was equally successful in restoring order in the internal concerns of his territories by breaking the power of village headmen known as Gowdas who as rent collectors or farmers had misused their opportunities to amass much wealth by speculation and also by other questionable and disloyal means and grown defiant in their dealings with the Raja. Kanthirava died in 1659 and during his reign, Kaveripuram from Gatti

Mudaliar of Madura, Turuvekere from Abdulla Khan, Periapatna, Bettadapura and Rudrapatna from Nanjunda Urs, Kadaba from Byrappa Naik, Basavapatna from Krishnappa Naik, Yelahanka from Immadi Kempe Gowda and various other places at wide distances were annexed and the limits of the Mysore kingdom were thereby extended on all sides. Kanthirava also established a mint at which were coined Hanas or Fanams which popularly bore his name and remained in circulation even during the time of Tippu Sultan.

Another of the ancestors of the present Ruling family of Mysore was Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar, fourteenth in succession from Yaduraja and who ruled from 1673 to 1704. He was a contemporary of Sivaji and Aurangzeb, and during the political convulsions of the period maintained his ground both by military heroism as well as by skilful diplomacy. In 1687 A.D. he managed to obtain possession of Bangalore which belonged to Venkoji of Tanjore. Venkoji finding himself unable to safely maintain possession of this town negotiated with Chikka Devaraja to sell the place for three lakhs of rupees. But before the transaction could be completed, Kasim Khan, the Mughal general of Aurangzeb, proceeded towards Bangalore and captured the place. He found it prudent, however, on account of the danger he had to encounter from the Mahratta armies, to transfer Bangalore to Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar on the same terms as those of Venkoji. Chikka Devaraja from this time forward sedulously cultivated the friendship of Kasim Khan who had now become established as the Mughal viceroy of the province of Sira which formerly belonged to the Bijapur king. Chikka Devaraja thus guarding himself against danger from the Mughals began extending his territories in directions that did not interfere with the Mughal operations. Tumkur was taken the same year; then turning east by way of Hoskote, the Mysore army descended the Ghauts and subdued a great part of Salem and a large extent of territories all around. Between 1690 and 1694, Chikka Devaraja extended his conquests westward and all the country to the left of the Bababudan hill including Hassan, Banavar, Chikmagalur and Wastara belonging to Bednore were annexed. Subsequently by a treaty concluded in 1694 with the chief of

Bednore, all these conquests except Aigur and Wastara were retained by Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar.

In 1696 while the Mysore army was besieging Trichnopoly which then belonged to the Naik of Madura, a Mahratta army which was marching to the relief of Ginjee where Rama Raja, the second son of Sivaji had been long besieged by the Mughals under Zulficar Khan, suddenly appeared before Seringapatam. The Mysore army at Trichnopoly was ordered to return to meet this danger. But as Kumaraiah who was commanding the force had taken a vow not to leave the place before he captured it, sent a portion of his army under the command of his son Doddaiiah. This force came up by rapid marches and by means of a stratagem inflicted a total defeat upon the enemy in which the two Mahratta leaders, Nimbaji Ghatge and Jayaji Ghatge were slain and the whole of their luggage and military stores came to the possession of the Mysore army. The stratagem * is thus described by Wilks :—

“In the evening, the Dalavoy sent a small detachment in the direction opposite to that on which he had planned his attack and in the probable line by which he would move to throw his forces into the capital. This detachment was supplied with the requisite number of torches and an equal number of oxen which were arranged at proper distances, with a flambeau tied to the horns of each, in a situation where they would not be observed by the enemy. At an appointed signal, the torches were lighted and the oxen driven in the concerted direction, so as to indicate the march of the army attempting to force its way through the besiegers by an attack on the flanks of their position. As soon as it was perceived that the enemy were making a disposition to receive the army of torches, Doddaiiah silently approached their rear and obtained an easy but most sanguinary victory.”

Kasim Khan, the friend of Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar, died in 1698. Chikka Devaraja however thought it prudent to continue to cultivate the Mughal friendship and accordingly sent an

* Readers of Roman History may be reminded of a similar stratagem adopted by Hannibal, the hero of the Second Punic War.

embassy in 1699 under one of his able officers, Linganniah by name, to Aurangzeb who was then at Ahmadnagar. Aurangzeb and his courtiers were conciliated with costly presents and the Mughal king had also been pleased with the part played by the Mysore ruler in defeating the Mahrattas. In return, Aurangzeb conferred on Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar the title of 'Raja Jugdev' and presented him with several insignias of honour, some of which are to be seen even to this day on public occasions.

Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar was also a noted constitution-builder and patron of learning and literature. He introduced many reforms to secure the internal peace of the country. In 1701 he regulated the business at the headquarters of Government by distributing it under 18 cutcherries or departments. These were:—

- (1) Nirupa Chavadi or the Secretary's Department, to which he appointed one Daroga or superintendent with three daftars—registers or books of record. All letters or orders despatched were previously read to the Raja and his approval obtained.
- (2) Ayakatt Chavadi, the business transacted in which was to keep the general accounts of revenue and disbursements, civil and military.
- (3) and (4) Ubhaika Vichara Chavadi or two-fold inquiry. He divided his whole possessions into two portions; that to the north of the Kaveri was called the Patna Hobli; that to the south of the Kaveri was named the Mysore Hobli; to each of these cutcherries he appointed one dewan with three daftars.
- (5) Shime Kandachar—it was the duty of this cutcherry to keep the accounts of provisions and military stores and all expenses of the provincial troops, including those connected with the maintenance of the garrisons with one bakshi and three daftars.
- (6) Bagal Kandachar (bagal, a gate or portal)—it was the duty of this department to keep the accounts of the troops stationed at headquarters.
- (7) Sunkada Chavadi or the cutcherry of duties and customs levied within his dominions.
- (8) Pom Chavadi—in every taluk where the Sunka or toll was taken, there was another or second station where a further sum equal to half the former amount was levied.
- (9) Tundeya or Thodaya Chavadi—where a further fourth of the first duty was levied in Seringapatam only.
- (10) and (11) In the Ubhaika Vichara were not included the Srirangapatna and Mysore Ashtagrama (eight

townships); each of these had a separate catcherry; besides the business of revenue, they were in charge of the provisions and necessities of the garrison and palace. (12) Benne Chavadi, the butter department—the establishment of cows, both as a breeding stud and to furnish milk and butter for the palace; the name was changed by Tippu to Amrit Mahal. (13) Patnada Chavadi—this catcherry was charged with the police of the metropolis, the repairs of the fortifications and public buildings. (14) Behin Chavadi,—the department of expedition or the post-office; the business of espionage also belonged to this department. (15) Samukha Chavadi—the officers of the palace, domestics and personal servants of every description belonged to the charge of this catcherry. (16) Devasthan Chavadi kept the accounts of the lands allotted to the support of religious establishments, the daily rations of food to the Brahmans, lighting the pagodas, etc., (17) Kabbina Chavadi or iron catcherry; this article was made a monopoly and its management was committed to a separate catcherry. (18) Hogesoppina Chavadi—the tobacco department, another monopoly by the Government. The headquarter office of the Mysore Government at Bangalore which is called the General and Revenue Secretariat even now is popularly known as Attara Catcherry in memory of the eighteen departments established by Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar.

This great ruler died in the year 1704 at the age of 76, much to the regret of his subjects. At the time of his death, his kingdom extended on the east as far as Salem, on the west as far as the Hassan and Kadur districts, on the south up to Coimbatore and Dharmapuram and on the north as far as the modern Tumkur district. He was the first ruler to establish a postal system in his dominions and the duties of the postal officials included not only the despatch of letters but also the duty of sending regular news-letters embodying secret and general information regarding all important men and occurrences in their neighbourhood. He had an advisory council of five ministers which he consulted on all important subjects. The most distinguished of these ministers were Yelandur Pundit, Tirumala Iyengar, Shadaksharaiah, Chik Upadhyaya who was the king's teacher in his younger days and Linganniah whose name has already been mentioned.