

## CHAPTER II.

### **Internal struggle for power among the ministers— First appearance of Haidar Ali—Part played by Mysore in the Carnatic War.**

The eighteenth century was a century of trouble and turmoil for the whole of India. The Bahamani Kingdom disappeared and the Mughal rule was established both in the Deccan as well as in Southern India. The Nizam-UI-Mulk of Hyderabad though nominally deemed to be viceroy of the Deccan on behalf of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi made himself practically an independent ruler. The Carnatic was divided into two provinces, Carnatic Balaghat and Carnatic Payeenghat with capitals at Sira and Arcot respectively. The Mahrattas under the Peshwas also during this period contended for supremacy and led plundering expeditions into Mysore and Southern India. In Mysore the period from 1704 to 1761 was marked by the feebleness in general of the Rajas who succeeded Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar and there were constant dissensions between them and their ministers and among the latter also, till all power finally fell into the hands of the famous Haidar Ali.

The powerful Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar, as stated already, died in 1704 and was succeeded by his son Kanthirava Wodeyar who nominally ruled the country till 1714 when he died. He was deaf and dumb and the actual administration was carried on by the ministers in his name. His son Dodda Krishna Raja who was twelve years old was next installed on the throne. Of the ministers of this period, the most noted were Devarajiah and his cousin Nanjarajiah. The former held the post of Dalavoy or head of the army, while the latter combined in himself the offices of Sarvadhi-kari or head of finance and revenue and of Pradhan or Privy Councillor.

At this time a change was made in the government of Sira, whereby the jurisdiction of Saadat-Ulla Khan who had hitherto governed both the Carnatics was confined to the Payeenghat under the designation of the Nawab of Arcot. Another officer by name

Amin Khan was appointed to the charge of Balaghat and was called the Nawab of Sira. Saadat-Ulla Khan resented the removal of the State of Mysore from his jurisdiction, as he believed that large treasures had been accumulated there and had begun to cast jealous eyes on them and he formed a combination with the Pathan Nawabs of Kadapa, Kurnool and Savanur and the Mahratta chief of Gutti and marched with an army to seize these treasures. Amin Khan resolved to be beforehand and promptly proceeded to invade the Mysore territory. The allies, however, came up with him and ultimately a compact was made for joint action with Saadat-Ulla Khan as leader. The Mysore Raja and his ministers bought off this formidable confederacy by paying a crore of rupees. The exactions however did not end here. Two years after, the Mahrattas appeared before Seringapatam and levied a contribution. In order to replenish these drains upon the treasury, an attack was made upon the palegar of Magadi who was taken prisoner and Savandoorgh with the accumulated treasure of 200 years was annexed to Mysore. Dodda Krishna Raja was a weak sovereign and the ministers had concentrated all powers in their own hands. The Raja died in 1732 leaving no issue.

The ministers Devarajiah and Nanjarajiah then selected Chamaraja who was a member of a different branch of the royal family and prevailed upon Devajammanni, the widow of Dodda Krishnaraja Wodeyar, to adopt him as her son to succeed to the throne. This Prince at the time of his accession was twenty-eight years old and became known as Chamaraja Wodeyar VII. For eight months after his coronation, he allowed the ministers to rule the country in his name as before. In the meanwhile, learning of their malpractices and misappropriations and being a man of ability, he managed to secure support from a section of the army, displaced the two ministers by others of his own choice and set to rule the country himself. He did so for eighteen months but introduced various unwise economies in the expenditure of the State. This conduct gradually created disaffection among his own supporters, including even Devajammanni, the adoptive mother. The two displaced ministers who were biding their time won over all the disaffected adherents to their side by liberal rewards, and finding a

suitable opportunity when the Raja's troops had gone out of the fort for certain military manœuvres, they secretly introduced their own men in small batches and ordered the fort gates to be shut. Devarajiah then putting himself at the head of his men and marching to the palace, created a tumult and began battering the doors. Chamaraja Wodeyar tried to parley with him but to no purpose. The gates of the palace were forced open and the Raja and his three wives were seized and sent as prisoners to Kabballoor in the present Malavalli taluk, a hill noted for its deadly climate.

After the deposition of Chamaraja Wodeyar, another adoption was made in the person of Chikka Krishnaraja Wodeyar who belonged to another branch of the royal family and was about four years old when he was placed on the throne. The minority of the Raja enabled the old ministers to regain their powers and to continue to rule in the name of the Raja, who after his coronation became known as Immadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar or Krishnaraja Wodeyar II. Sarvadhikari Nanjarajiah later died refunding to the State eight lakhs of rupees which he considered to have been misappropriated by him. He also gave a warning against the appointment of Karachuri Nanjarajiah, the younger brother of Devarajiah, as his successor. This warning was, however, unheeded and Devarajiah mistaking that his brother would be as docile towards him as he was in his earlier days appointed him as Sarvadhikari. This new Sarvadhikari was thirty years old at the time of his nomination and his true character became revealed soon after his appointment. According to Wilks, the profligacy of Nanjaraj made a shameless job of the revenue by the appointment of his own menial servants nominally to the office of Amildar but retaining them about his own person, leaving it to them to provide deputies and exacting a certain proportion of their income as a joint fund for himself and his brother.

About this time, Dost Ali Khan who had succeeded his uncle Saadat-Ulla Khan as Nawab of Arcot finding that Zahir Khan, Nawab of Sira to whose jurisdiction Mysore was supposed to be attached was prodigal in his expenditure and wishing to intercept for himself a share of the fancied wealth of Seringapatam sent out

a powerful army under two Mahomedan commanders Kasim Khan and Murad Khan. Devaraj who though fifty years of age possessed sufficient vigour met this invading army near Chennapatna and totally routed it. The two commanders were slain, their camp was plundered and Devaraj returned in triumph to Seringapatam. Later in 1746 while the Mysore army under Karachuri Nanjaraj was absent in the present Coimbatore district on an expedition against the palegar of Dharmapuram, Nasir Jung, the son of Nizam-Ul-Mulk, Subadar of the Deccan approached Seringapatam with a large army. Devaraj who had become aged by this time was no longer able to oppose Nasir Jung and he accordingly tendered submission and promised to pay an adequate amount of contribution.\*

In 1749 the Mysore army invested Devanhalli and after a siege of eight months took possession of it, when it was annexed to Mysore. It was at this siege that the famous Haidar Ali who proved later a formidable adversary of the English in India first attracted notice. His father was Fathe Muhammad whose tomb is even now to be seen at Kolar and who was killed when employed in the military service of the Nawab of Sira, leaving two sons Shabaz and Haidar aged nine and seven years respectively. At the time of the siege of Devanhalli, Shabaz was employed in the Mysore army as commander of 200 horse and 1000 foot. Haidar joined his brother in the siege as a volunteer horseman and soon attracted attention by his gallantry and daring. Karachuri Nanjarajah who had exchanged place with his brother Devarajah as Dalavoy on account of the latter's age appointed Haidar to the command of a small body of troops as a reward for his services.

In 1748 Nizam-Ul-Mulk died and Nasir Jung, his second son, who happened to be near him won over the army to his side and declared himself Subadar of the Deccan. Muzaffar Jung, son of Nizam-Ul-Mulk's only daughter however set himself up as a rival

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\*While negotiations were going on, Nasir Jung who was encamped near Thonnur amused himself by sailing on the large tank nearby containing very clear water and gave it the name of Mothi Thalav, which name even now survives.

to Nasir Jung on the ground that he had been nominated as Subadar by his grand-father. In this contest the English and the French were enlisted on opposite sides. Nasir Jung marching in support of Muhammad Ali's claim to the Nawabship of Arcot called to his aid the Pathan Nawabs of Kadapa, Kurnool and Savanur as well as Morari Rao Gharpore who ruled at Gutti. Nasir Jung also sent a summons to the Raja of Mysore to send a body of troops to his aid. Muhammad Ali of Arcot joined Nasir Jung's standard as also a contingent of British troops under Major Lawrence. This Muhammad Ali was a son of Anwar-Ud-deen who was at first guardian to Muhammad Said, the infant Nawab of Arcot, but who on the assassination of his infant ward, himself had been confirmed as Nawab by Nizam-Ul-Mulk. In this connection the following observations of Wilks throw much light on the situation :—

“The authority of the Mughals, although nominally resorted to when convenient, had positively no existence in the south. Nizam-Ul-Mulk had been avowedly independent of the court of Delhi; neither tribute nor obedience was rendered by him, nor by any of the officers really or nominally dependent on him; and it was puerile to claim the exercise of a power under an authority with which none had any other relation but that of rebellion. With regard to hereditary right or a modification of that right by the dispositions of the former possessor, where the whole was usurpation and the line of hereditary descent had not yet begun, the pretensions on this head seemed to have as weak a foundation as the mock mandates of the Mughal. On grounds however such as these, Nasir Jung claimed to succeed to the general government of the Deccan on the false pretence that his elder brother had resigned his right. Muzaffar Jung claimed the same authority on the pretended will of his rebel grand-father. Muhammad Ali claimed, to the prejudice of his elder brother Mahfuz Khan, a patrimony which had been in his family just five years, because Nizam-Ul-Mulk had promised and Nasir Jung would confirm to him the succession. Chanda Sahib did not put hereditary right into the front of his pretensions but rested his claims and fortunes on the authority of Muzaffar Jung. On pretensions futile and absurd as these, two European nations wasted their ingenuity in volumes of

political controversy, rendering homage to virtue and justice in respectively claiming the reputation of supporting the rightful cause but adding to the numerous examples of failure in attempting to reconcile the discordant elements of politics and morals, without daring to avow the plain and barbarous truth that the whole was a trial of strength among the bands of foreign usurpers, in which the English and the French had as much right to be principals as any one of the pageants whom they supported. But these nations were at peace and they could only appear in the contest as the mercenary supporters of these polished barbarians."

As desired by Nasir Jung, a force from Mysore was sent which included Haidar and his brother under the command of Berki Venkata Rao, a noted military officer of the time and this force joined the main army at Maddagiri or Madhugiri as it is now called. Nasir Jung was at first successful but ultimately lost his life near Ginjee at some distance from Pondicherry in December 1751. A French force penetrated Nasir Jung's camp and among the troops which remained faithful to him were those of Mysore. Haidar was forward in an attack on the flank of the French column. But the mahut of the elephant of Berki Venkata Rao having been killed by a cannon shot, a temporary fright caused the troops to give way and although this accident was quickly repaired and the elephant resumed its proper place, the attack was not renewed. At this time Nasir Jung directed his elephant to that part of his army where the Nawab of Kadapa was stationed and raised his hand in salutation to him, to which there was no response. It was not yet clear daylight at the time and Nasir Jung thinking that he had not been recognised raised himself up in the howdah of his elephant and repeated the salutation. The Pathan Nawabs had grievances of their own against Nasir Jung and were secretly in intrigue with Dupleix, the chief of the French. The Kadapa Nawab received Nasir Jung's salutation with two carbine shots which pierced the latter's body and killed him instantly. The Pathans then cut off the head of Nasir Jung and fixing it on a spear, exhibited it to the associates in the conspiracy as an evidence of complete success. Thereupon Muzaffar Jung was acknowledged by the whole army as Subadar of the Deccan and Muhammad Ali fleeing from the field

of action reached Trichnopoly. After this event, Berki Venkata Rao obtained permission to return with his troops to Mysore and accordingly did so.

It may be noted here that Haidar managed to derive considerable advantage in the confusion that followed after Nasir Jung was killed. Three hundred of the Bedar peons who were in Haidar's pay mixed with the crowd in the place where Nasir Jung's treasure had been kept and dexterously separated from the crowd two camels laden with gold coins and drove them clear of all the outposts to Devanhalli which was then Haidar's fixed home and station. At this time Haidar also sent to the same place three hundred horses and five hundred muskets which had been picked up by his men. Before his return, Haidar paid a visit to Pondicherry where he is said to have formed a high opinion of the discipline of the French troops and the skill of their engineer officers.