

CHAPTER III.

**Continued differences among the Mysore ministers—
Support to Muhammad Ali—Haidar's activities—Salabat
Jung's invasion of Seringapatam—Nanjaraj forced to
return from Trichnopoly.**

As has been already stated, Muhammad Ali fled from Gingee and took refuge in Trichnopoly. Here he was closely besieged by Chanda Sahib, the rival candidate for the Nawabship of Arcot. Muhammad Ali finding himself placed in a desperate situation became solicitous of enlisting more help on his side and accordingly sent an ambassador by name Seshagiri Pandit to the court at Seringapatam to enlist the aid of the Mysore troops. This envoy arrived at Seringapatam early in 1751. Devaraj was averse to involve Mysore in this transaction. But his younger brother Karachuri Nanjarajah was flattered with the prospects held out by Seshagiri Pandit of ceding to Mysore the fort of Trichnopoly and all its dependencies extending up to Cape Comorin and acting on his own authority, Nanjarajah consented to send an army to the aid of Muhammad Ali ignoring his elder brother Devarajah who had on account of growing age practically left the affairs of the State in the hands of his more energetic and more ambitious brother. Muhammad Ali at this time also succeeded in obtaining the aid of Morari Rao of Gutti whose troops were, as was believed at the time, the most select, the most faithful and the best organised of any in South India, being composed of a judicious mixture of Mahomedans, Mahrattas and Rajputs with an ample accompaniment of fighting men belonging to the Bedar caste. About the same time, the English at the suggestion of Clive sent an army to invest Arcot for the purpose of causing a diversion from Chanda Sahib concentrating all his troops against Trichnopoly. Nanjaraj's troops numbered 5000 horse and 10,000 infantry. The second in command was one Veeranna who resembled Nanjaraj in arrogance and military incapacity and was also destitute of that steadiness and presence of mind which Nanjaraj was generally acknowledged to possess. Haidar Naik, as he came to be called by this time, was in high favour with Nanjaraj and accompanied him with a

contingent of his own troops well drilled by some Frenchmen who were in his service.

Chanda Sahib's difficulties now began to increase. The scarcity of food combined with numerous annoyances from the allied troops induced the greater part of his chief commanding officers to demand their dismissal from his service. Finding his repeated exhortations to vigorous action treated with neglect, says Wilks, he no longer confided in his allies nor in himself. His health declined and his bodily strength became unequal to face the situation in which he was placed. He mildly acquiesced in the demands of his officers and apparently resigned himself to his fate. These chiefs on receiving assurances of safe conduct generally passed with facility to the service of their former enemies and in a few days, not more than 2000 horse and 3000 foot remained to Chanda Sahib of the mighty host with which but a few months before he had threatened the extinction of his rival. In this desperate situation, Chanda Sahib sought the protection of the Tanjorean General Monajee who is stated to have pledged his word to convey him safely to one of the French settlements. Hardly however had Chanda Sahib reached the place appointed for his reception, when he was seized and put in irons and the next day was secretly murdered at the instigation, it is said, of Muhammad Ali. The immediate consequence of these events was the surrender of the French troops to Muhammad Ali and thereby the war practically came to a conclusion.

Nanjaraj now demanded the cession of Trichnopoly as had been promised by Muhammad Ali. But the latter prevaricated and put off the fulfilment of his promise for one reason or another. At last however, he consented to cede the fort and the dependencies of Trichnopoly after the expiry of two months by which time he hoped to find a safe place of residence for his family. In the meanwhile, he undertook to relinquish to Nanjaraj the revenues of the island of Srirangam and of the adjacent districts and also to admit into the fort as an acknowledgment of Nanjaraj's possession a body of 700 Mysoreans under Katti Gopal Raj. When these people reached the fort, Muhammad Ali sent the keys, but the day being considered

unlucky Katti Gopal Raj did not accept the same, promising to return the next day. The next day accordingly the Mysore troops entered the fort. Muhammad Ali satisfying his conscience that by sending the keys the previous day he had fulfilled his promise, sent for Katti Gopal Raj and other important officers of the Mysore army on pretence of speaking to them and consulting them on certain matters and practically kept them under restraint. The arms of their followers were then seized and while some were confined, some were turned out of the fort. Muhammad Ali then ordered the fort-gates to be closed and a few shots to be fired into the Mysore camp outside. Nanjaraj now attempted to win over some of Muhammad Ali's officers, but the plot became disclosed and failed in its object. Nanjaraj after this failure found it unsafe to remain under the guns of the fort and accordingly removed himself with his followers to the island of Srirangam. After the expiry of the stipulated period of two months, Nanjaraj sent a formal deputation to demand the surrender of the fort. But he was informed that the secret plot which he carried on with Muhammad Ali's officers afforded sufficient grounds for a summary rejection of the claim.

Nanjaraj now began to negotiate with the French at Pondicherry, continuing to encamp on the island of Srirangam. Captain Dalton the commander of the English contingent which garrisoned the fort of Trichnopoly on behalf of Muhammad Ali finding that there was danger to the regular supply of provisions required for his troops reaching him from outside the fort, resolved in December 1752 to treat Nanjaraj as an enemy and made various attacks on the posts established by Nanjaraj but without success. Dalton however continued in his camp managing to obtain supplies of grain. Nanjaraj thereupon ordered Veeranna to establish a fortified camp on the opposite side of Trichnopoly with the object of making the blockade much more effective than it had been before and this blockade was complete early in 1753. Captain Dalton now felt that his position had become precarious and reported the matter in April 1753 to Major Lawrence who was at some distance. It was not however till the 6th May following that Major Lawrence was able to arrive at Trichnopoly. On the intelligence of his arrival reaching Veeranna, the latter struck his camp and rejoined

Nanjaraj on the island of Srirangam, thereby leaving it open for supplies to reach the English garrison without molestation.

Dupleix on learning the route of Major Lawrence detached a large army to support Nanjaraj and this force arrived by a different route at Srirangam the day after Major Lawrence entered Trichnopoly. On the 10th May 1753 Major Lawrence determined to cross to the island of Srirangam by the south-western ford, four miles above the town and offer battle to the Mysoreans. He commenced his march early in the morning and at day-break crossed the river which was almost dry and dispersed the usual guard on the ford side. The firing at the ford gave the first notice to Nanjaraj of the approach of the English and there was a little confusion in his camp. The fight continued throughout the day but Major Lawrence was forced to retreat in the evening. Abandoning the attempt to dislodge the Mysore troops from the island of Srirangam, Major Lawrence removed himself to the former camp of Veeranna as the most favourable position for covering supplies. For the next five weeks Major Lawrence was occupied in securing his supplies and Nanjaraj merely remained on the defensive. Dupleix considered at this time that the war could only end with a crushing defeat inflicted on the English army and sent 3000 of the corps of Morari Rao, 300 Europeans and 100 regular sepoys. Nanjaraj with this help moved to the southward of the river and in a few days compelled Major Lawrence to withdraw his camp to a position nearer to the fortress. Thereupon Nanjaraj took up an extended position placing his troops between Major Lawrence's camp and the route of his supplies so as to form an effectual blockade. The English troops then to avoid harassments by the enemy's cavalry withdrew to a position midway between Trichnopoly and Tanjore. In August following however, Major Lawrence returned and fought an action with the combined French and Mysore troops in which he was successful. On his entering Trichnopoly he found the town almost entirely depopulated, the people having departed on what was generally known as *Walse*.*

* *Walse* is thus described: "On such occasions the people buried underground their most cumbrous effects, and each individual man, woman and child

The attempts made by the English on the one side during the rest of the year to dislodge Nanjaraj and his allies from the island of Srirangam and on the other, the failure of the latter to take the fort of Trichnopoly by assault ended in no decided success to either party. On the 14th February 1754 finding that a large convoy of provisions was moving from the side of Puudukota towards the fort of Trichnopoly to supplement the stores of Major Lawrence, Hari Singh who was the rival of Haidar Ali ordered his troops to attack the convoy and the English troops taken by surprise were cut down before they could offer any successful resistance. When the fury of the action was over, Haidar always attended by his Bedar peons was found to be in possession of all the guns and tumbrils. Hari Singh however claimed them as his own, having actually carried them. After long discussion, Hari Singh was obliged to compound for one, leaving the remaining three to Haidar.

Major Lawrence now found that he could not proceed to any decisive action without further reinforcements and also found that it was impracticable to risk distant convoys and the woods of Tondiman were his only resource. About this time Muhammad Ali and the Raja of Tanjore prevailed upon Morari Rao by offers of money to separate himself from the Mysore confederacy. Devaraj who, as we know, was opposed from the beginning to go to the aid of Muhammad Ali also now found himself in difficulties to continue to supply funds on any large scale to maintain the Mysore army in the struggle for the possession of the Trichnopoly fort. Morari Rao finding that Nanjaraj was not as liberal in his supplies of money as formerly demanded a settlement of accounts. Altercations ensued and Morari Rao in order to extort before his departure as much money as possible from all parties, separated from the confederates on the 11th of May 1754 and encamped on the northern

above six years of age with a load of grain proportioned to their strength issued from their beloved homes and took the direction of a country where they could find refuge from the miseries of war. They sometimes took shelter in a strong fortress, but generally they lodged themselves in unfrequented jungles or hills, where they remained until the departure of the hostile army. In cases of protracted stay when their provision was exhausted, many of these unfortunate people died of starvation."

bank of the Coleroon, offering however to return if the whole balance due to him was immediately paid. He also secretly intimated to Muhammad Ali that on receiving good security for the payment of 3 lakhs of rupees from him he was willing to depart never again to return to the Payeenghat. Muhammad Ali had neither money nor credit but the Raja of Tanjore had both and was finally prevailed on to furnish the sum by instalments. Morari Rao had at this stage the audacity to reveal to Nanjaraj his negotiations with Muhammad Ali and offered to return to him on receiving the arrears of money due to him. Nanjaraj thereupon sent half a lakh of rupees as a first instalment but Morari Rao instead of rejoining the Mysore camp received half a lakh of rupees from Muhammad Ali also and then left the country.

At this time the English and the French under instructions from their respective Governments in Europe made attempts to conclude peace and terminate hostilities. During these discussions Nanjaraj thought it proper to open a separate negotiation with the English to induce them to prevail upon Muhammad Ali to transfer the fort of Trichnopoly to Mysore as had been originally stipulated. On the 11th of January 1755 the terms of a truce between the French and the English having been published, Nanjaraj refused to recognise the right of the French to make a treaty for him or to prevent his committing hostilities against the English and their allies and declared that he would not leave the country without obtaining possession of Trichnopoly. This determination however came to nothing as Nanjaraj shortly after, received positive instructions from Seringapatam to return on account of a danger nearer home. He accordingly left the place on the 14th April 1755, leaving the French detachment in possession of the island of Srirangam.

The danger which necessitated the recall of Nanjaraj was the invasion of Mysore to exact arrears of tribute by Salabat Jung who had succeeded his nephew Muzaffar Jung as Subadar of the Deccan. Devaraj was without sufficient means to pay this amount on account of the drain of all his resources in maintaining for a prolonged period a large army near Trichnopoly. Salabat Jung was accompanied by a French

contingent under Bussy, though the French were by treaty in strict alliance with Mysore. Bussy however intimated to Devaraj that the French were equally the allies of the Nizam and therefore bound to fight the battles of Salabat Jung and treat their allies of Mysore as their enemies for the time being. Devaraj found Salabat Jung approaching Seringapatam before Nanjaraj could arrive with his troops. It was also feared that the Mahrattas from the Poona side were preparing to invade the country. At last it was agreed that Mysore should pay to Salabat Jung 56 lakhs of rupees, but the treasury was entirely exhausted by the enormous expenses incurred in the operations against Trichnopoly, aggravated by the subsidy paid during most of the period to Morari Rao and by the loss of ten lakhs of pagodas lent to Muhammad Ali. The revenues had also been diminished by the contributions levied by Peshwa Balaji Rao on his return march from a campaign in the Deccan. It therefore became necessary to devise some extraordinary means of satisfying Salabat Jung. In this extremity the whole of the plate and jewels belonging to the Hindu temples in the town were put in requisition, together with the jewels and precious metals constituting the immediate property or personal ornaments of the Raja and his family, but the total sum which could thus be realised amounted to no more than one-third of what was stipulated to be paid. For the remainder, Devaraj prevailed on the Sowcars or bankers of the capital to stand security.