

CHAPTER IV.

Haidar Ali appointed Foujdar of Dindigul—Further differences between Devaraj and Nanjaraj—Devaraj fixes his abode at Satyamangalam—Through Haidar's efforts good relations established between Devaraj and Nanjaraj as well as the Raja—Haidar pacifies troops clamouring for pay—Further favours to Haidar.

A short time after the return of the Mysore troops from Trichnopoly, it became necessary to appoint a strong and capable person at the head of affairs for that portion of the country which depended upon Dindigul. The ministers at Seringapatam suspicious of the presence of an English force near Dindigul felt the need of the appointment of a capable officer as Foujdar of that place. The choice of the ministers fell on Haidar Ali who had continued to advance in the favour of Nanjaraj by the part he played in the military operations around Trichnopoly. Wilks' account of Haidar Ali at this period of his life is so graphic that it may with advantage be given here, more or less, in his own words: "In the course of the operations before Trinchnopoly, the Bedar peons in the service of Haidar were generally augmented and a body of select Pindaries also gradually raised for similar purposes. These people who were found in the service of many of the princes of India received no regular pay but lived on the devastations of the enemies' country. Haidar on his first nomination to a command had engaged in his service a Brahmin mutsaddi named Khande Rao. To the cool and calculating mind of a Brahmin accountant, this man added great sagacity and original thinking, a boldness which did not hesitate regarding means and a combination of ideas which enabled him to convert the unprofitable business of war into a regular system of finance. Haidar who could neither read nor write remedied his lack of education by trusting to a most extraordinary memory and showed himself able at this early period of his political life to go through arithmetical calculations of some length, with equal accuracy and more quickness than the most expert accountant. The consultations of these two persons produced a regular system by which the plunderers received, besides their direct pay, one half

of the booty which was realised, the other half being appropriated by Haidar under a combination of checks which rendered it nearly impossible to secrete any portion of the plunder. Movable property of every description was their object. They did not hesitate to acquire by simple theft even from friends when that could be done without suspicion. Nothing was unseasonable or unacceptable; from convoys of grain down to the clothes, turbans, and ear-rings of travellers or villagers, whether men, women or children. Cattle and sheep were among the most profitable heads of plunder; muskets and horses were sometimes obtained in booty, sometimes by purchase. The numbers under Haidar Ali's command increased with his resources and before he left Trichnopoly, besides the usual appendages of a chief of rank in elephants, camels, tents and magnificent appointments, he was rated on the returns and received pay for 1500 horses, 3000 regular infantry, 2000 peons, and four guns, with their equipments."

On his nomination as Foujdar or military Governor of Dindigul, Haidar left Khande Rao at Seringapatam to watch over his interests at court and proceeded to Dindigul at the head of 5,000 infantry, 25,000 horse, 2,000 peons and 6 guns. On the way he defeated some of the pategars who showed any opposition and thereby acquired much booty from them. In the meanwhile, Khande Rao was perpetually sounding the exploits of his master to Nanjaraj exaggerating the disturbed state of the country and the necessity of augmenting the forces, and more and more assignments of the revenues of other taluks were granted for that purpose. In the internal management of the country now committed to his charge, Haidar evinced the same penetration and skill which distinguished him on other occasions and became able in a short time to vie with the most experienced Amildar in valuing the resources of a village, in detecting the mis-statements of a fraudulent accountant from hearing them read, or in devising the best means of increasing the revenue. It was at Dindigul that he also first obtained from Srirangam, Trichnopoly and Pondicherry skilled artificers directed by French experts and began to organise a regular artillery and arsenal. The operations necessary for the complete

establishment of Haidar's authority in the Province of Dindigul occupied the greater portion of the years between 1755 and 1756.

In the meanwhile, the general affairs of Government at Seringapatam proceeded as usual under the direction of the two brothers, Devaraj and Nanjaraj. But after sometime, the Raja Chikka Krishnaraja Wodeyar began to evince signs of impatience at the thraldom in which he was kept. He was now twenty-seven years of age and had been married to a daughter of Nanjaraj. Although he was accorded all the external attention due to his position, the Raja felt that he was only a pageant sovereign and openly attempted to form a party of his own against the two brothers. These latter kept themselves fully informed of the trend of events in the palace and sent warnings to the Raja, but he gave no heed to them. To check the activities of the Raja, Devaraj counselled mild measures but Nanjaraj was for the adoption of strong ones. Devaraj besides taking note of the relationship that existed between the Raja and the Dalavoy family had also repented of the hasty action on his part in dethroning Chamaraja Wodeyar VII and transporting him to Kabballoor, where a merciful death had released him from the terrible suffering he endured there. Popular opinion also condemned Devaraj, though silently, for this outrageous conduct on his part and held him responsible for the fate that had befallen Chamaraja Wodeyar. Devaraj therefore wished to save himself from further public odium as well as from the torments of his own conscience. Nanjaraj whose violent temper did not allow him to exercise sufficient self-control took a line of his own and proceeded to barricade all the approaches to the palace and lined the walls with his troops. He then wished for a parley with the Raja before proceeding further, but this was rejected and the palace gates were closed and a heavy fire was opened on the troops of Nanjaraj. Nanjaraj, however, soon managed to bring up his guns near to the palace gate and to blow open the same. The defenders within found further resistance hopeless and abandoning their places fled for concealment to the women's apartment. Nanjaraj then leaving Veeranna in charge of the gate proceeded with a small escort into the interior of the palace and searching all the apartments collected together all the men

found in them. The Raja was then requested to seat himself in the usual hall of audience and in his presence some of the men were put in irons, while others had their noses and ears cut off and turned out into the streets. Nanjaraj then replaced these men by followers of his own and after presenting to the Raja the formal mockery of respect and obedience both from himself and from his men left the palace.

Devaraj deeply offended with his brother's conduct left Seringapatam and fixed his abode at Satyamangalam in 1757. His whole family, all his personal adherents and 1000 horse and 2000 infantry who were in his service followed him. After reaching Satyamangalam, he issued orders revoking the assignments of revenue made to Haidar on his appointment as Foujdar of Dindigul. Khande Rao, Haidar's agent, apprised his principal of the events that had taken place at the capital and advised him to return to Seringapatam and by means of a personal appeal in the proper quarters to attempt to obtain restoration of the revoked assignments of revenue.

Before Haidar's arrival at the capital, Nanjaraj found himself in a critical situation by the unexpected appearance of a Mahratta army under Peshwa Balaji Rao in March 1757 in the neighbourhood of Seringapatam demanding a contribution. Nanjaraj in spite of the spirited defence he offered was unable to drive away the Mahrattas and was forced to make peace with Balaji Rao for a contribution of thirty-two lakhs of rupees. The cash and jewels which could be produced amounted to no more than five lakhs and for the liquidation of the remainder, he was compelled to surrender in pledge a large and valuable extent of territory including Nagamangala, Belur, Kadur, Chicknaikanahalli, Huliyurdoorg and nine other taluks. Haidar on arriving at Seringapatam found that the Mahrattas had just departed, leaving their agents for the collection of revenue in the pledged taluks and a body of 6000 horse for their support. Haidar after acquainting himself with the facts remonstrated with Nanjaraj for not calling up his troops from Dindigul and advised him to withhold the revenue from the Mahratta agents and to expel their troops on the approach of the

rains, when the floods in the rivers would prevent them from returning till the next season for military operations.

Haidar next moved Nanjaraj for the restoration of the assignments of revenue resumed by Devaraj and both together, after deliberation came to the conclusion that Haidar should wait on Devaraj at Satyamangalam and make a personal appeal to him. Haidar however had no personal influence with Devaraj and therefore took with him Khande Rao to aid him in his negotiations. Happily for Haidar an opportunity soon offered itself. Before his departure from Dindigul to Seringapatam, Haidar had been approached for military help by the Nair Raja of Palaghat who was at war with the Raja of Cochin and the Zamorin of Calicut and who was being hard pressed by them. Haidar accordingly had sent a detachment of two thousand horse, five thousand infantry and five guns, under Mukdum Sahib, his brother-in-law. The two allied chiefs of Cochin and Calicut could offer no adequate resistance to Haidar's troops and made a stipulation with Mukdum Sahib for terminating operations, to restore the conquered territories of the Raja of Palaghat and to pay a contribution of twelve lakhs of rupees in compensation by instalments. The presence of an army under a Mussalman commander waiting to receive the instalments due was found irksome and a proposal had been made to Devaraj at Satyamangalam to substitute the force under a Mussalman commander by a force under a Hindu commander to whom the Rajas of Cochin and Calicut agreed to pay the contribution of twelve lakhs of rupees stipulated to be paid to Mukdum Sahib. At this juncture, the intercession of Khande Rao enabled Haidar to obtain the restitution of the Dindigul territory and in return he recalled Mukdum Sahib from the Malabar country and relinquished the claim for twelve lakhs of rupees in favour of Devaraj. A force then under Hari Singh, one of the most zealous Rajput adherents of Devaraj was despatched to Malabar to take the place of Mukdum Sahib and his troops.

After his return to Dindigul, Haidar found occupation for his troops by attempts to seize the fort of Madura and the districts dependent on it for himself with the aid of the French. But in

January 1758 an urgent necessity arose for his return once more to Seringapatam. The pay of the troops there, on account of the financial embarrassments due to causes which have been already indicated, had fallen into arrears and the troops had mutinied and sat in Dharna at Nanjaraj's residence, not only interdicting him and his family by religious execration, from food and drink but also preventing any water or provisions being carried into his house. In this situation, according to Wilks, Nanjaraj was obliged to sell the provisions and stores collected in the capital but these attempts only appeased the mutineers for the time being and did not fully satisfy their demands. Haidar on receiving this information desired Khande Rao to meet him at Satyamangalam and himself proceeded from Dindigul with the whole of his disposable troops in the same direction. He had written to Devaraj before he left Dindigul and went forward unattended to represent to him personally the evils arising from the disunion of the brothers and the absolute necessity of a reconciliation to prevent the entire dissolution of the Government. The personal influence of Khande Rao, added to the arguments of Haidar, prevailed on Devaraj and he consented to accompany them. Accordingly in the month of March 1758 they ascended the Ghauts through the pass of Gejjelhutty. On their arrival at Hardnahulli, the indisposition of Devaraj compelled them to halt for fifteen days, after which they proceeded to Mysore where Devaraj remained, while Haidar and Khande Rao proceeded to Seringapatam. Devaraj insisted as a preliminary to all terms of reconciliation with his brother that Nanjaraj should make atonement for the violation of public decorum in his conduct at the palace, and the terms being adjusted by Khande Rao, Nanjaraj on the 23rd April made his submission to the Raja, whom he had not visited since the former outrage and a salute was fired from all the guns of the garrison to announce the Raja's forgiveness and the restoration of Nanjaraj to his favour.

The public reconciliation of the brothers next followed. Nanjaraj and Haidar accompanied by all the chiefs, public officers and principal inhabitants of Seringapatam went in procession to conduct Devaraj from Mysore. Devaraj, however, six days after his arrival at Seringapatam died from dropsy on the 19th June.

The army was still clamorous for the remaining arrears and Nanjaraj who had been disgusted with the difficulties largely due to his own creation and with the insults he had experienced in the adjustment of the former claims of the rebellious troops and also depressed in mind by the death of his brother requested Khande Rao and Haidar to take over the troublesome task from his hands and to bring about satisfaction as best as possible. Haidar throughout all these transactions appeared in the character of a general benefactor. The gratitude of Nanjaraj was due for his conduct in effecting reconciliation between the brothers, the troops considered him as their only hope for the liquidation of their arrears, the Raja beheld in him as yet only his preserver and protector from the violence of Nanjaraj and all orders of men began to look up to Haidar for the restoration of public prosperity and peace.

Haidar proceeded with constant demonstrations of deference to the Raja's orders to distribute in lieu of money all public property that could be so applied down to the elephants and horses of the Raja's retinue. Knowing from his own experience the probable amount of imposition in the charges of arrears, he seized on all the accountants and by threats and tortures compelled them to produce the true accounts. By these means he was enabled in the course of a few days to discharge 4000 horse and a large number of other rabble. After the ring-leaders who had caused violence departed from the fort, Haidar ordered the seizure of all but the most extravagant or the most indigent and plundered them of all their property as having been forfeited to the State.

Now turning to Hari Singh, it may be stated that he found himself unable to collect the promised contribution of twelve lakhs of rupees and on coming to know of the death of his patron Devaraj, he left the Malabar country and was camping at Avanasī in the Coimbatore district, ostensibly to refresh his troops but really to complete his negotiations with the Raja of Tanjore for the transfer of his services to that State. We have already seen that there was considerable rivalry between Hari Singh and Haidar and the former had made no secret of his contempt for the latter's capacity as a military commander. On account of the death of Devaraj and the

growing power of Haidar, Hari Singh now thought it prudent to avoid the Mysore country and to betake himself for employment elsewhere. Haidar detached a body of his troops under Mukdum Sahib on the pretext of returning a portion of his troops to Dindigul but in reality with secret instructions to attack Hari Singh and his camp at Avanasi. Hari Singh accordingly was surprised and killed by Mukdum Sahib's troops and his camp was plundered. Among the plunder acquired by this infamous exploit were 300 horses, 1000 muskets and 3 guns which were brought in triumph to the capital. To the Raja, Haidar presented three guns for the service of the State and fifteen beautiful horses for the royal stables, the remainder of the horses and military stores, together with the money and property being appropriated by him.

At this time, Haidar mentioned the subject of the payment due to him of a sum of three lakhs of rupees for which sowcar security had been furnished by Devaraj. The claim was readily recognised by Nanjaraj and with the assent of the Raja an assignment on the revenues of the Coimbatore district was granted to him for its liquidation. At the same time, some substantial marks of recognition of Haidar's services as a faithful servant of the State were regarded as necessary and accordingly the fort of Bangalore and the extent of the country depending on it were conferred on him as a personal jahagir.