

## CHAPTER V.

### **The Mahrattas retire from Mysore—Fall of Nanjaraj— Haidar becomes supreme dictator.**

The Mahrattas as was to be expected did not tamely acquiesce in the expulsion of their troops and agents from the pledged taluks and they returned to Mysore early in 1759 when the weather became favourable for military operations. Their two commanders Gopal Hari and Ananda Rao Rastea first took possession of all the pledged territories from which their troops had been formerly expelled. Then they laid siege to Bangalore and took possession of Chennapatna situated at a distance of thirty-seven miles on the way to Seringapatam. At this time, some arrears were still due to the troops at Seringapatam and Nanjaraj found it difficult to depute a sufficient body of them to resist the Mahrattas. In this crisis Haidar volunteered to undertake this service. His first care was to place fairly strong detachments at the intermediate forts of Maddur and Malavalli, places situated on the two principal approaches to the capital at a distance of 27 and 22 miles respectively. The detachment at Malavalli was commanded by his uncle Meer Ibrahim and that at Maddur by Latif Ali Beg who was to recover Chennapatna from the Mahrattas, if he found a suitable opportunity. Latif Ali Beg was a gallant and hardy Mughal and he shut up his troops in the fort of Maddur giving the appearance that he expected the Mahrattas to attack him there. Having thereby gained sufficient time, he obtained information from his spies of the dispositions of the enemy's troops and moving by a circuitous route towards Chennapatna at night, he carried the place by escalade before day-break without any heavy loss on either side. Haidar on receiving this intelligence marched without a moment's delay and concentrated his force near Chennapatna. Gopal Hari on his part, abandoning the siege of Bangalore marched with a large force to oppose Haidar. The latter, however, was too wary to attack him openly at once and to possibly sustain a defeat. He now called to his aid the lessons he had learnt while at Trichnopoly of the advantages of a well-ordered night attack against an irregular enemy. Haidar had his camp in a secure place and he hardly ever made a movement

by day, thereby preventing the enemy even from conjecturing his plan of action. At nights he attacked the Mahrattas unexpectedly, causing much embarrassment to them and foiling all their attempts to defend themselves. This kind of irregular warfare went on for about three months and the food supplies of the Mahrattas began to fail. Gopal Hari becoming weary of this unprofitable contest opened negotiations with Haidar and concluded an agreement abandoning all claims on Mysore for a payment of thirty-two lakhs of rupees and in return agreed to restore all the pledged taluks.

Haidar urged on Nanjaraj the advisability of accepting this agreement, which the latter accordingly did. As however the treasury was exhausted, Nanjaraj proceeded to levy a Nuzerana (a forced payment under the name of a free gift) from all the principal public servants and monied inhabitants. Khande Rao who had been charged with the whole of these arrangements could only realise a sum of 16 lakhs of rupees with which he proceeded to his master's camp with authority from the Raja and Nanjaraj conveying their approval of the arrangement concluded by Haidar. As regards the balance of 16 lakhs, such was the influence of Haidar even with the Mahratta sowcars that the latter accepted the personal security of Haidar and made themselves responsible to Gopal Hari for the balance on an understanding between all the parties interested in the transaction that Haidar was to have the direct management of the pledged taluks for liquidating the remainder of the debt. Haidar then despatched without delay his own agents and Amildars to the taluks which now came under his own charge and after introducing the requisite arrangement, he returned in triumph to Seringapatam where the Raja received him in a grand Durbar held for the purpose and on his approach welcomed him by the name of Fatah Haidar Bahadur. Nanjaraj who was present on the occasion paid him the novel compliment of rising on his approach and embracing him, apparently proud of the discernment he had shown in the detection of Haidar's talents when he was yet an unknown individual.

Nanjaraj's troubles however did not end with the conclusion of peace with the Mahrattas. The large appropriations of revenue which had been made for the liquidation of the Mahratta debt, the discharge of the bonds of Devaraj as well as the assignments made

to Haidar for the support of the troops under his command left but little surplus to meet the ordinary expenses of Government and considerable arrears due to the army again began to accumulate. The insults and injuries which the Raja had suffered from his father-in-law Nanjaraj had never been forgotten. The events in connection with the Mahratta invasion had given Haidar's agent Khande Rao frequent opportunities of visiting both the Raja and the dowager Rani Devajammanni, widow of Dodda Krishnaraja Wodeyar. She was a lady of great shrewdness and capacity and through her means it was arranged with Khande Rao that the necessity which had arisen of satisfying the arrears due to the army should be made an occasion for depriving Nanjaraj of his power to keep the Raja and his family in thralldom with mere external marks of respect due to royalty.

A mock-plot was then arranged with some of the commanders of the army to demand of Haidar the arrears due to them, to which Haidar was to reply that funds for payment to troops other than his own were not under his control. After some time a show of pressure being made, Haidar accompanied the discontented troops with pretended demonstrations of unwillingness and repugnance to the residence of Nanjaraj, where they sat in Dharna as they had sat on a former occasion. Nanjaraj had received indirect hints of this conspiracy against him and finding no other means of deliverance sent his resignation of office to the Raja and persuaded the troops who had sat in Dharna to address their demands to the latter. The Dharna was then removed to the palace, Haidar also accompanying under pretence of pressure. Through Khande Rao's mediation Haidar was introduced into the presence of the Raja in the palace and after interviewing the Raja, Haidar informed the troops that the arrangements ordered would require a few days to be completed and that, in the meanwhile, he would render himself personally responsible for the liquidation of their arrears. This assurance was received with confidence and satisfaction by the discontented troops. In the result it was settled that Nanjaraj should surrender his office retaining only the title of Sarvadhikari, that he should have a jahagir yielding three lakhs of pagodas on condition of his maintaining a body of one thousand horse and three

thousand infantry for the service of the State and that he should retire from Seringapatam and reside in his jahagir.

Nanjaraj accordingly departed from Seringapatam to Mysore in June 1759 on the plea of offering worship to the deity at Nanjangud but stopped at Mysore on the ground of illness. Khande Rao was appointed Pradhan and to Haidar was granted a further assignment of revenue for the settlement of the arrears and for the regular payment of the disaffected troops. This assignment caused the extent of the country in his possession exceed one-half of the whole territory.

Sometime after, objection was taken to Nanjaraj continuing to reside at Mysore but he would not depart from the place under what he regarded as the nominal orders of the Raja. Haidar then marched to Mysore and besieged the fort in which Nanjaraj with his family was residing. Demand had also been made for the surrender to the Raja of the sannad of his office but Nanjaraj would not comply on the ground that the sannad was one granted to his ancestor by a former ruler of Mysore who was also an ancestor of the present Raja himself. Nanjaraj being stubborn in his refusal both to depart from Mysore as well as to surrender the patent of his office, "that Lion of the field of battle," to quote the language of a Mahomedan historian, "therefore could hesitate no longer and gave orders to his brave soldiers to commence the attack, who immediately opened a fire of all arms, guns and muskets on the fort. The fire of war was consequently lighted upon all sides and both parties fought courageously; but, at length, by the valour and strength of arm, Haidar Ali's fearless troops brought on the heads of the besieged a resemblance of the Day of Judgment. Still their chiefs defended themselves with great bravery for three months when their provisions and ammunitions becoming exhausted, they surrendered and Nanjaraj accompanied by his family in carriage proceeded to Haidar's camp and his troops marched out of the fort. Ultimately it was agreed that Nanjaraj should fix his residence at Konanur in the present Nanjangud taluk, 25 miles from Mysore and have a jahagir near the western frontier of Mysore. For this service and the expenses incurred thereby, Haidar demanded a fres

assignment of revenue but even Khande Rao opposed this demand. As however no alternative was left, four more taluks selected by Haidar were added to his possessions. The discussions which preceded this transaction produced considerable irritation between Haidar and Khande Rao and left on the mind of the latter a feeling of disgust. In February 1760 Nanjaraj's daughter who had been married to the Raja died and this event further tended to widen the breach between them.

Nanjaraj's fall from power did not, it was found, help the Mysore royal family to regain their independence but only substituted one Mayor of the palace for another. Khande Rao who was now Pradhan was, as has been already stated, irritated with Haidar on account of what he considered an act of extraordinary greediness. A suitable opportunity was therefore awaited to expel Haidar from the service of the Raja and this opportunity soon came when he was found encamping with only a limited number of his troops, the rest having been despatched to the aid of the French against the English. Devajammanni the dowager Rani and the Raja also considered the opportunity favourable and in the temple of Sri Ranganatha an oath was taken by all the three of maintaining inviolable secrecy in all actions to be taken against Haidar. The presence of the Mahrattas under Beenee Visajee Pundit at Doddaballapur and Devanhalli was regarded as affording a hopeful augury of the success of their undertaking and a body of 6000 horse was engaged for helping the Raja to drive away Haidar.

On the morning of the 12th August 1760 which was the day when the Mahratta contingent was expected to reach Seringapatam, the gates of the fort were not opened at the accustomed hour and before daylight had fully dawned, a tremendous cannonade was opened on the position occupied by Haidar. Haidar, according to Wilks, surprised at this unexpected attack, immediately ordered Khande Rao to be called but was still more astonished when he heard that Khande Rao was distinctly perceived on the ramparts directing the fire of the artillery. Haidar realised at once the extent of the treachery and prepared to meet it with his accustomed presence of mind. His troops soon found cover in the ravines and

hollows without sustaining much loss and his family could only find shelter in a hut which on account of its situation was not exposed to the fire from the fort. Haidar's first care after making a disposition of his small body of troops was to secure all ferry-boats and boatmen in a situation concealed from the view of the fort and to put the boats in a state of repair. The Mahrattas procrastinating and not arriving in time, Khande Rao was obliged to postpone his final attack upon Haidar. During the day however, they mutually attempted to negotiate for a settlement. Haidar represented that but for the help of Khande Rao he would not have attained his present position, while Khande Rao replied that he was equally under obligation to Haidar and that no personal indignity was meant as he was then acting under the Raja's orders and that if Haidar retired from the Mysore service, every facility would be afforded to him to seek his fortune elsewhere.

After nightfall, Haidar made a distribution of as much money and jewels as could be conveyed by one hundred horses and accompanied by six officers and two camel harkars, all men of tried fidelity to him, he landed safely on the opposite bank of the river. About twenty spare horses accompanied for the purpose of replacing those which might drop from fatigue. Thus equipped Haidar fled with all possible speed from the capital and long before the arrival of the Mahrattas on the following morning, he was far beyond the reach of their pursuit. Khande Rao the next morning visited Haidar's deserted quarters and removed to the fort all the remaining treasure and properties as well as the members of his family. Among these members were Tippu then about nine years old and his baby brother subsequently known as Kareem Sahib, born prematurely the preceding day.

Haidar made his way from Seringapatam to Anekal which was under the command of his brother-in-law Ismail Ally and arrived at that place before daylight. On arriving at Anekal, Haidar instantly despatched Ismail Ally to Bangalore for the purpose of ascertaining the fidelity of Kabeer Beg who had been appointed Killedar of the Bangalore fort in place of Berki Srinivasa Rao, son of Berki Venkata Rao who was in command of the fort at the time of its

siege by the Mahrattas. Ismail Ally arrived at an early hour at Bangalore and found Kabeer Beg loyal to Haidar. On receiving tidings of this faithfulness on the part of Kabeer Beg, Haidar left for Bangalore with a detachment of troops which he found at Anekal and arrived at the place on the evening of the 13th August having performed on horseback a journey of ninety-eight miles in twenty hours, the first seventy-five miles on the same horse. In the meanwhile, Kabeer Beg on the pretext of disbursing the pay of the garrison displaced all the Hindu troops inside the fort by Musalman sepoys. These arrangements had scarcely been completed, when orders arrived from Khande Rao to seize the Killedar and preserve the fort for the Raja but it was too late for any action to be taken.

Haidar was now left to the resources of his own mind. He immediately sent intelligence to Mukdum Ali to return to Bangalore with his troops. The only possessions on which Haidar could hope for the rebuilding of his fortune were Bangalore on the north and Dindigul in the extreme south, with Anekal and some of the fortresses of Baramahal. Haidar augmented his treasure-chest by obtaining a loan of 4 lakhs of rupees from the sowcars of Bangalore. Some of the scattered detachments of his army also now joined him. Soldiers of fortune of every description were also invited to his standard. Among the persons whom he engaged in his service at this time was Fazl-ulla Khan, a man of distinguished reputation and son-in-law of Dilawar Khan who was Nawab of Sira.

Mukdum Ali on entering Baramahal found himself blocked from further progress by the Mahratta army under Beenee Visajee Pundit and Gopal Hari acting on behalf of Khande Rao and was forced to take refuge in the fort of Anchetidurga, 25 miles from Anekal. From there he sent urgent demands to Haidar for reinforcement. Fazl-ulla Khan was accordingly sent with 4000 troops and five guns but he found his troops inadequate and could make no impression on the superior strength of the Mahrattas. Haidar's cause seemed to be desperate at this time but his good fortune came to his aid and relieved him from a position which otherwise would

probably have brought about his ruin. On the 7th January 1761 the Mahrattas had been defeated by Ahamed Shah Abdali at the battle of Panipat and the Peshwa fearing an invasion from the north had sent orders to all the Mahratta detachments wherever they were for assembling at Poona. Haidar at the time was not aware of the defeat of the Mahrattas at Panipat and he was surprised at the easy terms which were offered to him by the Mahratta commanders to return to their own country, namely, the cession of Baramahal and the payment of three lakhs of rupees. He accordingly accepted these conditions and Mukdum Ali being thus relieved from the critical situation in which he had found himself proceeded to Bangalore, while the Mahratta army marched in haste towards Poona. Haidar soon received intelligence of the defeat at Panipat and now suspended all action in connection with the cession of the Baramahal. At this time a French detachment consisting of two hundred cavalry and one hundred infantry also joined Haidar at Bangalore.

Haidar after Mukdum Ali joined him felt sufficiently confident to take hostile action against Khande Rao's troops, at the same time sending detachments to Salem and Coimbatore for the purpose of recovering the country and revenues wrested from him. He himself marched in a south-westerly direction and crossed the Kaveri near Sosalé. Khande Rao and Haidar met at Nanjangud. But Haidar was defeated in the first encounter. Haidar next took a remarkable step to retrieve his fortune. With a select body of two hundred horse including some French troops, he made a circuitous march by night and early the next morning unarmed and alone presented himself as a suppliant at the door of Nanjaraj at Konanur. Being admitted, he threw himself at Nanjaraj's feet with a semblance of penitence and grief and attributing all his misfortunes to the gross ingratitude with which he had requited the patronage of Nanjaraj entreated him to resume the direction of public affairs and to take his old servant once more under his protection. Nanjaraj was thus completely won over and with about 2000 horse and an equal number of infantry, he gave to the ruined fortune of Haidar the advantage of his name and influence announcing in letters despatched in every direction his determina-



tion to exercise the office of Sarvadhikari, which he still nominally retained, with Haidar as his Dalavoy or Commander-in-chief.

Haidar now attempted to form a junction with his army but Khande Rao prevented him from doing so and it seemed as if Haidar's ruin was inevitable. At this time Haidar's superior talent enabled him to extricate himself from a position which for ordinary people would have been a hopeless one. Khande Rao was at this time near a place called Katte Malalvadi, 26 miles south-west from Seringapatam and Haidar was at a distance of about 10 miles from him. Haidar now prepared letters in the name and with the seal of Nanjaraj addressed to the leaders of Khande Rao's army, referring in them to an engagement which they were said to have made to seize Khande Rao and deliver him to Nanjaraj for a stipulated reward.

These letters were designedly made to fall into the hands of Khande Rao's outposts by whom they were carried to him. Khande Rao not perceiving the artifice was seized with a sudden panic and felt that he was betrayed by his own officers and instantly mounting his horse rode at full speed towards Seringapatam to escape from a supposed danger which really did not exist and reached that place about the middle of February 1761. The cause of Khande Rao's sudden departure being unknown to his officers, each began to look to his own safety and while in this state of dismay and confusion, Haidar fell on Khande Rao's army and completely routed it, capturing the whole of the infantry, guns, stores and baggages.

Haidar however did not take advantage of his success and pursued Khande Rao at once. He preferred to secure the resources of the whole of the lower country and with that object descended the pass of Gejjelhutty and recaptured all the places which had declared for Khande Rao, levying also large contributions from Khande Rao's partisans. He then ascended the Ghauts and arrived at Chandgal early in May on the south bank of the Kaveri near Seringapatam. Here he opened negotiations with Khande Rao deprecating further hostility. There was a remnant of Khande Rao's cavalry, chiefly Mahrattas, between five and six thousand

encamped with a corps of infantry on the island of Seringapatam. Haidar on the opposite bank of the river which was then fordable made every evening a show of exercising his troops till after sunset. On the eighth day of this tacit armistice instead of dismissing them as usual, he made a sudden dash across the river as if in the performance of an evolution of a parade and by this surprise captured the whole of their heavy equipments and most of the horses belonging to Khande Rao's troops, thereby almost completing the ruin of his adversary. Haidar then crossed over to the island and encamped near where Ganjam now stands.

From here he despatched a message to the Raja intimating in substance that if Khande Rao who was a servant of his was surrendered and if the large balances still due to him were liquidated, he would seek his fortune elsewhere unless the Raja wished to continue him in his service. The Raja found that no means existed of paying the balances or of making any appropriation of funds for their speedy liquidation and in this state of distress consented to surrender Khande Rao. A further proposal was also made that taluks yielding a revenue of about 3 lakhs of pagodas were to be reserved for the expenses of the royal household and one lakh for Nanjaraj, that Haidar should assume the management of the remainder of the country and reimburse himself the arrears due to him and also provide funds for the pay of the army and other public charges of every description.

Haidar when he waited on the Raja appeared as if he reluctantly undertook this heavy load of responsibilities, but from this time forward he became the supreme dictator of Mysore. Before Khande Rao was surrendered, the Raja and the ladies of the palace obtained a promise from Haidar to treat him mercifully and Haidar assured them that Khande Rao was his own man and that he would treat him as endearingly as he would treat a parrot. Haidar literally fulfilled this promise and the unfortunate Khande Rao was confined in an iron cage in Bangalore and was fed during the remainder of his life with rice and milk.