

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### **Installation of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar—Part played by Rani Lakshmi Ammanni in regaining the lost power of her family.**

On the departure of Tippu's four elder sons with their families from Seringapatam to Vellore, communications were opened with the Hindu royal family to place on the vacant throne of Mysore the son of the last Raja Chamaraja Wodeyar who died in 1796. The Commissioners proceeded to the young Prince's residence on the 24th June 1799 with Purnaiya whose presence at the first interview, it was considered, would be helpful. A portion of the apartment in which the Commissioners were received was marked off by a curtain, behind which the Rani and the other female members of the family were seated. The family resided at the time in a house near the north face of the fort, adjoining that of Mohiuddin, fourth son of Tippu. The Commissioners were received by the male part of the family with Nandi Raja the maternal uncle of Krishnaraja Wodeyar at their head with expressions of great joy and gratitude. The general outline of the proposed arrangements and the intentions respecting the Raja were communicated to Rani Lakshmi Ammanni, widow of Krishnaraja Wodeyar II. The Rani in reply expressed her lively sense of the generosity of the British Government which had raised her and her family from the depths of misery to their former station of elevation. The young Raja is described as possessing at the time a bright and expressive countenance, though somewhat delicate in health. He is reported to have shown symptoms of alarm at first on the arrival of the Commissioners but they soon disappeared.

To instal the Raja at Seringapatam was considered inexpedient, because it could only be done in the Mahomedan Palace where there were still a number of ladies belonging to Tippu's Zenana and his remaining children and a function of the kind in their vicinity was considered both cruel and improper. Bangalore was next thought of, but there was objection on the ground that it was in a corner of the territory assigned to the Raja. In the end, it

was found that Mysore was the only place where the ceremony of installation could conveniently take place. But in old Mysore it was found that not a single house was standing and in the new Mysore built by Tippu there were a number of houses but very bad ones and water was at the distance of half a mile from the Nazarbad fort. However, as there was no alternative, it was decided that the ceremony should take place at Mysore which was also fixed as the capital of the Raja and the day chosen for the ceremony was the 30th of June, it being regarded as an auspicious day.

The Raja and his family had sometime before removed themselves from Seringapatam to Mysore where the best arrangements which the circumstances admitted had been made for their accommodation. General Harris reached Mysore on the 29th June attended by his suite and an escort of European cavalry for the occasion. On the morning of the 30th June the Commissioners with Meer Alum and an escort of European regiment proceeded to the residence of the Raja and brought him to the pavilion which had been specially constructed near the Lakshmiramana Swamy temple in the old fort. The ceremony of placing the Raja on the musnud took place about noon and was performed by General Harris as senior member of the commission and Meer Alum, each of them taking a hand of His Highness on the occasion. General Harris delivered to the Raja the seal and signet of the Raj, while also announcing publicly in the Durbar the appointment by the Governor-General of Purnaiya as Dewan. General Harris then impressed upon Purnaiya that he should loyally advance the interests of his master and of the country till the Raja reached the age of discretion, when he should abide by the pleasure of the Raja. The new Dewan then received the sannad of his appointment at the hands of the enthroned Raja. Butché Rao was appointed finance minister and Badami Bishtopunt as Bakshi of the cavalry force, while Khan Jehan Khan was nominated as Bakshi of the Barr Cutcherry or infantry force. The announcement was also made of the appointment of Lt-Col. Close as Resident at the Court of Mysore on account of his extraordinary talents, proficiency in the Indian languages and familiarity with Indian manners and customs. After

the installation was over, three volleys of musketry from the troops on the spot and a royal salute from the guns of Seringapatam were fired. In a letter addressed by the Commissioners to Lord Mornington, it is stated that the deportment of the young prince during the ceremony was remarkably decorous considering the untoward circumstances which had preceded his elevation and confirmed the opinion which had been formed of him at the first visit. Gulam Ali Khan, Ali Raza, Badru Zumaun Khan, Syed Muhammad Khan and some others of rank spontaneously attended on the occasion. The inauguration having taken place under an open pandal, Harris' letter also referred to the large number of spectators that were present at the time and to the joy visible in their countenances.

Previous to the installation, a formal letter signed by the Rani Lakshmi Ammanni and Rani Devajammanni, widow and mother respectively of Immadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, was sent to the Commissioners on the 25th June after the interview on the previous day. "Your having conferred on our child," said the letter, "the Government of Mysore, Nagar and Chitaldrug with their dependencies and appointed Purnaiya to be Dewan has afforded us the greatest happiness. Forty years have elapsed since our Government ceased. Now you have favoured our boy with the Government of this country and nominated Purnaiya to be his Dewan. We shall, while the sun and the moon may continue, commit no offence to your Government. We shall at all times consider ourselves as under your protection and orders. Your having established us must for ever be fresh in the memory of our posterity from one generation to another. Our offspring can never forget an attachment to your Government on whose support we shall depend."

Some days after the installation, a treaty known as the Subsidiary treaty of Seringapatam between the Company's Government and the minor Raja of Mysore was signed on the 8th July on behalf of the Raja by Lakshmi Ammanni and Purnaiya.

Thus was now fulfilled the long-cherished wish of Rani Lakshmi Ammanni to regain the kingdom for her family. We have

seen that the Hindu royal family of Mysore never quietly acquiesced in the unrestricted exercise of power by their Dalavoyes or in the complete usurpation of their authority by Haidar and Tippu. Rani Devajammanni's efforts in 1760 to free the royal family from the shackles of Haidar had only ended in rivetting the fetters tighter and in the disaster that befell Khande Rao. This failure, however, had never discouraged this lady nor her still more heroic daughter-in-law Rani Lakshmi Ammanni from continuing to maintain the hope of regaining their power some day. The latter lady though secluded in the zenana showed herself as undaunted as she was sagacious and some of her letters to her agents and to the well-wishers of her family go to show her quiet faith in the mercy of Providence to relieve her and her family from their misery and her resolve to put forth all efforts needed for the accomplishment of her purpose. The regard of the people for their old royal family had never abated even during the darkest hour of their misery as may be seen from a letter written by an English prisoner of war in 1783, i.e., 23 years after the loss of their power when Tippu had succeeded to the place of his father and was being approached by the Madras Government for the conclusion of peace to terminate the second Mysore War. The letter, it may be stated, was written during the annual Hindu national festival of the Dasara :—

“The annual Gentoo feast commenced this evening (23rd September 1783) which was continued according to custom for 9 days. The King of Mysore made his appearance in a verandah in front of his palace about 7 o'clock. It is only on the occasion of this anniversary that he is visible to his nominal subjects.

“This young prince in whose name the family of Haidar Ali who assume only the title of Regent carry on the administration of Government is allowed for himself and his family an annual pension. He is treated with all those marks of homage that are paid to crowned heads. In his name proclamation is made of war or of peace and the trophies of victory are laid at his feet. Like kings, too, he has his guards. But these are appointed and commanded by the usurper of his throne whose authority and safety depend on the prince's confinement. Yet such is the

reverence that is paid by the people of Mysore to the blood of their ancient kings and so formidable are they rendered in their present state of subjection to the most vigorous character as well as powerful prince in the peninsula of Hindusthan, that it is thought by the present Government of Mysore not to cut off the hereditary prince of Mysore according to the usual policy of despots but to adorn him with the pageantry of a crown.

“The spacious palace in which the young King of Mysore resides stands in a large square in the very centre of Seringapatam in an angle of which our prison was also situated. Hence we had an opportunity of enjoying the sight of this annual festival in which we were indulged during the whole time that it lasted. The curtains with which the gallery was hung being drawn up discovered the king seated on a throne, with numerous attendants on each side, some of whom fanned him, while others scattered perfume on his long black hair. The verandah was decorated with the finest hangings. The Raja was adorned with resplendent precious stones, among which a diamond of immense size and value shone with distinguished lustre. On an extended stage in the open square along the front of the palace, musicians, balladiers, and a species of gladiators entertained the king with his train in the gallery and the multitude that filled the square with music, dancing, tumbling, wrestling, mock engagements and other pantomimical diversions. The ladies of His Majesty’s harem as well as the European prisoners were on this occasion indulged with greater freedom than usual, being allowed to enjoy the spectacle through lattice windows as well as other subjects of Mysore..... The king sat motionless in great state for several hours, rose up and when he was about to retire, advancing to the edge of the gallery showed himself to the people who honoured him with marks of the most profound and even superstitious veneration. The curtains then dropped and His Majesty retired to the inner parts of the palace.”

‘RANA’ Laxmi Ammanni, as she is called in the letters of General Meadows, Governor of Madras and others, or ‘Maha Matrusri’ Lakshmi Ammanni as she is uniformly designated in the Mysore records was a daughter of Katti Gopal Raj Urs whose

name we have heard in connection with the military operations connected with the cession of Trichnopoly by Muhammad Ali to Mysore. She was married in 1759 to Immadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and took her place in the palace as his queen. Immadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar died in 1766 and he was first succeeded by his eldest son Nanjaraj and then by his second son Chamaraja Wodeyar who died in 1776. Haidar then prevailed upon Rani Lakshmi Ammanni to adopt, as has been stated already, a young child of three years Chamaraja, son of Devaraj of Arikuthara now known as Chamarajanagar. Lakshmi Ammanni however found that Haidar's hold on his power never slackened and she secretly sent emissaries to Lord Pigot, Governor of Madras, with overtures for help to recover her lost power. Shortly after, she appointed as her agent at Madras Thirumala Rao who had left Seringapatam and settled there after the fall of his patron Anche Shamiah. In return for the services of the English, the Rani undertook to pay one crore of rupees for the expenses of the English army and thirty lakhs as reward to influential persons. The arrest and displacement of Lord Pigot interrupted the negotiations and Thirumala Rao retired to Tanjore. The devastations of Haidar Ali and the serious danger with which Madras was threatened in the second Mysore War with the English induced Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, to authorise John Sullivan the Resident at the court of Tanjore to conclude a treaty through Thirumala Rao with the Rani of Mysore. This treaty was concluded on the 28th of October 1782 and bore the signatures of Thirumala Rao and Narayana Rao as Mysore Pradhans and of John Sullivan the British Resident, together with the attestation of Rev. Schwartz who, as we know, had formerly been deputed to Seringapatam by the Madras Government as an envoy to Haidar. Subsequently peace having been concluded with Tippu by the English, this treaty became inoperative.

Lakshmi Ammanni however did not abandon her attempts for the restoration of her family. In 1790 on the occasion of the 3rd Mysore War, she reopened negotiations with General Meadows, Governor of Madras, and he informed her that if victory was theirs the British Government would be very happy to restore the kingdom to the rightful rulers and that the question of the distribution of

territories could only be considered later. Lord Cornwallis having concluded peace with Tippu much against the will of General Meadows, the Rani's efforts brought her no substantial results on this occasion also.

Lakshmi Ammanni's unfailing pertinacity of will and faith in the justice of her cause were such that she never despaired of ultimate success. Writing to Thirumala Rao a few days after the death of Chamaraja Wodeyar in 1796, she commended him for having enlisted the goodwill and support of Mr. Sullivan and many other English officers. She also sent a copy of the agreement made by Tippu with the French and concluded the letter by saying that unless the English troops arrived before the French, danger to the English dominions could not be averted. If any delay occurred, she also said, as on former occasions, the alliance between Tippu and the French would be like that between fire and wind and that the whole country would be devastated and the people ruined. Her final words were—"There are no able military commanders to oppose the English troops and everybody wishes that evil should befall Tippu..... If you will employ your usual ability and tact now, God Sri Ranga will help us."

In February 1799 Rani Lakshmi Ammanni sent a letter to Lord Mornington recapitulating the negotiations carried on with the Company's Government for help and concluded with these words:—"We have recently heard that the Almighty conferred on you high distinctions and sent you to this country, doubtless, to relieve us from our miseries. We have also heard that you are generous, good-intentioned and pious. We therefore seek your protection. Restore our country to us according to former agreements." Josiah Webbe, Secretary to the Madras Government, in acknowledging this and other letters on the 16th April 1799 assured the Rani of the pleasure that her letters had given and concluded by saying,—“Your Pradhan Thirumala Rao has for a long period continued to give us every information respecting you, and His Lordship solemnly promises to serve you—a fact which your Pradhan must have mentioned to you. You may rest assured that there will be no end to our friendship. We have now declared war

against Tippu. But we know not what will be the result. God only knows it. I cannot write much on that head, but after the war is over, they will attend to your business. There is no doubt."

Events followed rapidly after this date. Seringapatam fell on the 4th of May. Tippu's family and his officers surrendered unconditionally and the whole country was in the hands of the Governor-General in a very short time. The Partition Treaty between the Nizam and the British was signed on the 22nd June and the young rightful descendant of the old Hindu royal family was installed on the throne on the 30th June and Rani Lakshmi Ammanni had the proud satisfaction of her labours being successfully terminated when she signed the Subsidiary Treaty on the July 8th following on behalf of her minor grandson Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar. At a time when the French arms were still successfully coping with those of the English, she had the acumen to perceive that an alliance with the English alone would securely seat her descendants on the throne of Mysore.