

CHAPTER XXXVII.

General and economic conditions of Mysore in the early part of the 19th Century.

Before proceeding to give a sketch of the administration of Mysore by Purnaiya during the minority of Mumtaz Ali Krishna Raja Wodeyar, it may be of interest to give a short description of the general condition of the country and dwell at some length on its agriculture, manufactures and industries, its population and a few other matters. The luminous report containing the result of the investigations made by Dr. Francis Buchanan in 1800 and 1801 is the main source of information for the purpose mentioned. Buchanan was a surgeon in the East India Company's Service on the Bengal medical establishment and appears to have been gifted with a mind well-fitted for acute observation and also equipped with the requisite scientific and technical knowledge. The Governor-General Lord Mornington now elevated to the rank of a Marquis and known as Marquis Wellesley selected this officer to travel through and report upon the State of Mysore and the country which fell to the share of the Company.

Buchanan left Madras on the 23rd April 1800 and travelling via Poonamalai, Sri Perambathur, Conjeevaram, Wallajapet, Arcot, Vellore and Venkatagiri reached on the 5th May 1800 Bethamangala, the first place on the Mysore table-land where he halted for some time and reached Bangalore on the 10th May. Bethamangala contained at the time about 70 houses fortified by a mud wall and some towers in a ruinous state. At the south side were the remains of a large fort of no use and on the north side was another fort not so far decayed. One end of this fort had been repaired as a last resource of defence against depredators prowling about the country. There existed also an old temple, the roof of which as an additional defence had been surrounded by a parapet of mud. The country around was exceedingly bare and the population scanty. Even the smallest village of five or six houses was found fortified. The defence of a village consisted of a round stone wall about 40 feet in diameter and six feet high. On the top was a parapet of mud

with a door in it to which the only access was by means of a ladder. In case of a plundering party approaching the village, the people ascended into these towers with their families and valuable effects and having drawn up the ladder defended themselves with stones in throwing which even the women were found to be experts. Larger villages had square forts with round towers at the angles. Takal, Buchanan found, was a strongly fortified village at the end of a small hill of granite and had a triple wall, each line strengthened with various defences. The houses about a hundred in number were very poor and hardly filled up the space between the outer and second line of defence. About 60 houses were occupied by Mussalmans, among whom was the Amildar. There were eight families of Brahmins who were in possession of all the other offices of Government. Malur contained about 500 houses and most of them were white-washed within and painted red and white without. Many of them were terraced with mud and several were roofed with tiles. The houses were in general clean and had no windows. The town consisted of a fort and of a pettah. The outer wall was surrounded by a strong hedge of mimosa or Shikai or soapnut. The town was badly supplied with water. On the 8th May 1800 a weekly fair or santhe was held at this place and Buchanan found that provisions of all kinds, coarse cotton cloths, blankets or Kumblies, and articles of iron for the country use and the like were exposed for sale. A small duty was levied on all persons frequenting this fair, bearing a certain proportion to the value that each brought for sale. At Kadigodi and its neighbourhood the villages were surrounded by hedges which were very high and thick so as almost entirely to conceal the mud wall 3 or 4 feet high and 20 feet in diameter which improved the prospect, especially as there were a good many mango trees well cared for.

On the morning of the 10th May Buchanan reached Bangalore and visited the fort the same day. The entrance of the fort towards the pettah or town was a very a handsome building of cut granite. The place also contained many well-constructed magazines and also huts for the accommodation of the troops but there was no good building except the Mahal or palace constructed by Haidar. Although it was constructed of mud, it was not without some

degree of magnificence. On the upper storey it contained four halls each comprising two balconies of state for the prince and each balcony faced a different cutcherry for transacting business. At each end of the cutcherry was a balcony for officers of the highest rank. Inferior officers occupied a hall under the balcony of the prince open in front and supported by columns as high as the roof of the upper storey. The populace were admitted into the open court in which there were fountains for cooling the air. At each end of the halls were private apartments which, in Buchanan's view, were mean, small and inconvenient. The public rooms were neatly painted and ornamented with false gilding. The bath consisted of a small room in which a person could sit and have water poured on him. There were two apartments for the ladies. The one for the principal wife contained the hall where she gave audience to the ladies of the harem and to the wives of the Mussalman chiefs. Before the palace was a large square court with a Noubat Khana or stations for the band music in front.

Buchanan also visited the gardens of Haidar and Tippu where the present Lal Bagh is situated. He found them extensive and divided into square plots separated by walks, the sides of which were ornamented with fine cypress trees. The plots were filled with fruit trees and pot herbs, a separate kind of plot being allotted for each kind of plant such as the roses, pomegranate and so forth. The walks were not gravelled. Want of water was much felt. Some portions of the garden were supplied from three wells, the water of which was raised by the Kapilay or leather bag fastened to a cord passing over a pulley and worked by a pair of bullocks which descended an inclined plane. Some portions of the garden were watered without the assistance of any machinery. In the climate of Bangalore Buchanan observed that the cypress and the vine grew luxuriantly and apple and peach trees both produced fruit. Some pine and oak plants introduced from the Cape of Good Hope were also found thriving.

At Bangalore Buchanan found many Mussalmans in great distress owing to the change of Government, thrown out as they were from their military occupations under Tippu's Government

and unwilling to take up civil occupations or to attach themselves to the military service of the new Government. Some of them, however, who had a little money were found betaking themselves to trade, while the poorer classes had begun to earn their livelihood by agriculture.

Leaving Bangalore on the 12th May 1800, Buchanan reached Seringapatam on the 17th of the same month. Round about Bidadi the villages were found to be small and poor and were not fortified, the woods by which they were surrounded being regarded as sufficient to keep off the irregulars that attended the invading armies. In case of invasion the villagers were accustomed to take refuge in the neighbouring hill-fort of Ramgiri. On the way to Chennapatna there were a number of bamboo trees, the grains of which were gathered for food by the poorer inhabitants in the neighbourhood. Chennapatna was an open town containing about a thousand houses with a stone fort at a little distance. On the way to Maddur there were extensive plantations of cocoanut palm and fruit trees. Many of the fields were surrounded by hedges, which however were not in good repair. There were also wild date trees from which toddy was extracted both for drinking as well as for making jaggery which was used by the poorer classes. The country was found much depopulated, the miseries of war having driven away about two-fifths of the cultivators. None of the villages was fortified, the vicinity of the capital being found sufficient to scare away the marauders. Mandya was a poor village fortified by a mud wall. On the evening of the 16th May a flight of locusts passed over the town. It extended in length probably about three miles. Its width was about a hundred yards and its height fifty feet. The insects passed from west to east in the direction of the wind at the rate of 6 or 7 miles per hour. The whole ground and every tree and bush was covered with them but each individual locust halted for a very short time on any one spot. They went in a very close body and left behind them very few stragglers. In an hour after the flock had passed, few were to be discovered in the neighbourhood of the town. It was stated to Buchanan that the locusts were very hurtful and often devoured entire crops. The noise of this immense number of insects some-

what resembled the sound of a cataract. At a distance they appeared like a long, narrow, red cloud near the horizon which was continually varying in shape. Each was as large as a man's finger and was of a reddish colour.

On the 19th May Buchanan had an interview with Purnaiya and was assured of every assistance to complete his mission, an official also being appointed with orders to call upon every person who was required for interview. Buchanan stayed at Seringapatam for a fortnight to survey the place. On the south bank of the river was a bridge which served also as an aqueduct to convey from the upper part of the river a large canal of water into the town and island. To Buchanan the island had a dreary and ugly appearance. The town of Seringapatam was very poor and the streets were narrow and confused, the generality of the houses being very mean, although many of the chiefs were well lodged after their own fashion. Numbers of houses which had been abandoned by the Mussalman officers of Tippu who had migrated to the Carnatic were occupied by the officers of the garrison.

The Mussalman palace at Seringapatam was found to be a very large building surrounded by a massy and lofty wall of stone and mud but outwardly of a mean appearance. There were in it, however, some handsome apartments which had been converted into barracks. The private apartments of Tippu formed a square in one side of which were the rooms that he himself used, the other three sides being occupied by warehouses. In these warehouses were lodged at the time the five younger sons of Tippu who had yet to be removed to Vellore. These were good-looking boys and were permitted to ride and exercise themselves in the square when they were desirous of doing so. They were also allowed to view the parade and to hear the music of the bands belonging to the troops in garrison. Outside the fort were two buildings the Lal Bagh and the Daria Dowlat Bagh occupied respectively by the Resident and the Commandant of the British force. Close to the Lal Bagh palace was the Mausoleum of Haidar in which Tippu also was buried. The tombs were covered with rich cloths and there was also an establishment of Mullahs to offer up prayers and

of musicians to perform the Noubat. Outside the fort the greater part of the island was covered with the ruined mud walls of the suburb of Shahar Ganjam but a new town was springing up with broad and regular streets unlike the old Ganjam. There were 4163 houses and 5499 families in the fort and 2216 houses and 3335 families in the Shahar Ganjam. Besides this population, there was also a large garrison with its numerous followers.

Buchanan while staying at Seringapatam also paid a visit to Mysore where he found the reconstruction of the old palace had so far progressed as to have made it a comfortable place of residence for the young Raja. He found the Raja very much recovered in health and though he was only between 6 and 7 years of age, he spoke and behaved with great propriety and decorum. On account of etiquette the Raja endeavoured in public to preserve a dignified gravity of countenance but when his countenance relaxed, Buchanan noticed that he was very lively and interesting. The Sovereign Raja of Mysore was called the Kartur as distinguished from the Dalavoy who was also at the time popularly called Raja.

Between 5th June 1800 and 13th June 1801 when Buchanan finally left the Mysore country, he made three trips from Seringapatam and travelled according to an itinerary prepared for him in different parts of the Mysore territory as well as in the Company's districts of Coimbatore, Malabar, Canara and other parts. His first trip from Seringapatam occupied the interval between 5th June and 1st September 1800 and diverging from the old route at Ramgiri included such places as Magadi, Bangalore (second time), Kolar, Sidlaghatta, Chikballapur, Doddaballapur, Madhugiri, Sira, Tumkur, Gubbi, Chiknayakanahalli, Thuruvekere, Nagamangala, Melkote, French Rocks. The second trip was between the 5th September 1800 and 5th October following and included Palhalli, Linga Rajana Chatra, Periapatna, Heggadadevankote, Nanjangud, Mysore, Malingy, Sivasamudram, which he left on the 6th October 1800 and after travelling in the Company's territories re-entered the Mysore territory at Chandragutti on the 18th March 1801. From here travelling through Keladi, Ikkeri, Sagar, Nagar, Mundagadde, Shimoga, Kudli, Basavapatna, Harihar, Davangere,

Chitaldrug, Hiriyur, Hosadurga, Banavar, Halebid, Belur, Hassan and Chennarayapatna, he reached Seringapatam on the 3rd June 1801. In his final trip he left Seringapatam on 4th June 1801 and visited Bannur, Sosalé, Malavalli, Sathnur, Kankanhalli and Maralvadi which was the last place he visited in the Mysore territory and from here he travelled via Krishnagiri, Vaniambadi, Amboor, Vellore, Wallajapet and other places, till he reached Madras on the 5th July 1801.