

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### General and economic conditions of Mysore in the early part of the 19th Century—(continued).

In his first trip from Seringapatam which he left on the 6th June 1800 Buchanan adopted the usual route as far as Ramgiri from where he diverged to Magadi. On the way he found deserted Savandoorg which had been captured by the British in the campaign of Lord Cornwallis. The road to Magadi passed through a wild and romantic country which consisted of low hills intermixed with little cultivated valleys having only dry crops. The country round Thavarekere was well cleared and seemed to have suffered little from the wars. On the 21st June Buchanan reached Bangalore and found much of the intervening country covered with bushes. The greater part of the arable lands around Bangalore was cultivated. But at some distance from it many fields were waste due to paucity of cultivators.

The inhabitants of Bangalore had been, according to Buchanan's information, kept shut up by Tippu within a hedge which surrounded the town to a distance of about 3 miles on the ground of their having been friendly to the English in the campaign of Lord Cornwallis. On the approach of General Harris' army however the guards having withdrawn, the inhabitants immediately dispersed and the place continued deserted for some months. The people were found at the time of Buchanan's visit returning to the place from all quarters and trade and manufacture were increasing apace. Here almost every coin of India was found current, but all accounts were kept in Canteroi Pagodas and Fanams. The exchange was fixed by an officer of Government once a month and when that was done the whole neighbourhood adopted the rate so fixed which was called *Niruk* even though under a different jurisdiction.

Vakkleri which Buchanan reached on the 6th July contained about a hundred houses and was fortified by a wall and a tower both of mud and had no hedge. The reason assigned by the inhabitants for living thus shut up was the frequency of robbers who lived in

the hills and woods and who in the night plundered everything that was not well secured. Between Vakkleri and Kolar rice and ragi formed a very large proportion of the crop, but the country was very poorly watered. Kolar was surrounded at the time by a large mud fort which was being repaired. The town contained seven hundred houses, many of which were inhabited by weavers. A handsome mausoleum erected by Haidar in memory of his father existed in the town and nearby there was a mosque with a college of Mullahs or Mussalman priests. The hill-fort above Kolar was in a ruinous condition. On the top of the hill were four small villages which had their fields, gardens and tanks. There was a spring of water issuing from the hillside through stones forming a resemblance to a cow's mouth. The place was regarded holy and was frequented annually by about 10,000 people. The villages round about were generally surrounded by small fortifications as defence against the Bedars who posing as servants of the neighbouring palegars made incursions at night times into the villages. Whenever such people were found prowling about, one or two men kept watch in a tower and on the first alarm all the men flew to their arms and from the tower fired upon the robbers who attempted to carry away the cattle.

A great part of the country around Sidlaghatta was over-grown with stunted bushes though fit for cultivation. Sidlaghatta contained 500 houses, many of them being occupied by weavers. There were also two fine tanks and also a number of gardens watered by them. Much of the country between Sidlaghatta and Chikballapur, though arable, was found uninhabited. Chikballapur contained 400 houses, of which more than a hundred were occupied by Brahmins. The country beyond the Nandi hill was more desolate than near Chikballapur, one-third of what was formerly cultivated being still unoccupied. Many of the villages were entirely deserted and continued to be so from the time of Lord Cornwallis' invasion. The inhabitants complained that they were afflicted with a number of evils, the principal ones being scarcity of rain followed by that of corn and the march of one defending and three invading armies, all of whom plundered the country which prevented transport of grain and led to the perishing of a large

number of people from starvation. A large number of cattle had also perished from infectious diseases communicated by the cattle of the invading army. The country between Chikballapur and Doddaballapur was almost entirely unoccupied.

The fort of Doddaballapur built entirely of mud was very large and quite strong, all within however being a heap of rubbish and confusion. The Ashur Khana of Abbas Kuli Khan who was dispossessed by Haidar was, however, a handsome building. On one side of the fort there were a number of gardens, while on the three other sides were the houses of the inhabitants which numbered 2,000 and were surrounded by a mud wall and a hedge. In this town was born Mir Sadak, the detested minister of Tippu. Madhugiri which had suffered considerably in former years was found reviving under the care of Purnaiya's brother-in-law who was the Amildar of the place. On the way from Madhugiri to Sira, Buchanan noticed large groves of date trees and in spite of the Sultan's orders to eradicate them to put a stop to drinking, they were found flourishing as before. Sira was a place of importance at the time. Here Buchanan was informed that Tippu removed from this part of the country 12,000 families for the new town of Shahar Ganjam which he had founded. Many of the villages in the neighbourhood were destroyed by Parasuram Bhow and Hari-panth when they passed through those parts and many of the villages were still in ruins at the time of Buchanan's visit. In Sira 2000 houses had been built and many of its former inhabitants whom Tippu had removed to Seringapatam had returned and many others also were found coming in from the country that had been ceded to the Nizam. The only building worth noticing at the time was the monument of a Mussalman officer who was in military command during the Mughal Government. The town also contained a very large number of tombs of men who were regarded by the Mahomedans as saints.

Tumkur formed the headquarters of an Amildar and contained from five to six hundred houses. The fort was well-built and in excellent repair. The pettah stood at some distance. A large extent of land was under ragi crop and there were also many rice

fields. Gubbi was a small town containing 360 houses but was a mart of some importance. It contained 154 shops. The houses in their external appearance were very mean and the place was extremely dirty. But many of the inhabitants were thriving and trade was considerable. Muganayakankote contained about 190 houses and was strongly fortified with mud walls. On the occasion of Cornwallis' invasion the Mahrattas destroyed the market which was of handsome construction. When Parasuram Bhow and Haripanth left this neighbourhood, their people are said to have carried off all the handsome girls that fell into their hands and swept the country so clean of provisions that three-fourths of the people perished of hunger. On the 19th August at night Buchanan was awakened by a prodigious noise in the village which was at some distance from his tent. On enquiry of the sentry he was told that there was no one near except himself, every other person having gone into the village as soon as the uproar commenced. In the morning Buchanan was informed by his interpreter that one of the cattle drivers had been possessed by a "Pisachi" or evil spirit and had been for some time senseless and foaming at mouth and the noise he heard had been made to frighten away the devil. But it proved obstinate and ultimately was subdued by a Brahmin throwing some consecrated ashes on the victim, at the same time uttering some Manthrams or incantations. Buchanan on examination however found that the paroxysm which overtook the man was due to an attack of epilepsy.

Chiknayakanahalli was a large, square town strongly fortified with mud walls and having cavaliers at the angles. In its centre was a square tower fortified in a similar manner. In the outer town a wide street ran all round and on both sides there were short lanes to the outer and inner walls. The houses were very mean and dilapidated and did not occupy the whole space. They were in number about 600. The place was plundered by Parasuram Bhow when he was on his way to Seringapatam to join Lord Cornwallis, but very little was obtained as the inhabitants had secreted their most valuable effects and withdrawn to the hilly country. When the Mahrattas returned to Sira, they sent for the inhabitants with assurances of protection and began by making small daily

distributions of charity to the Brahmins. By this means they inveigled back a considerable number of the inhabitants and no sooner had they got the leading men into their power than they put them to torture until the wretched men revealed where their properties were hid and thus they are said to have procured five lakhs of rupees. Thuruvekere consisted of an outer and an inner fort strongly defended by a ditch and a mud-wall. It had besides, at a little distance, an open suburb and contained 700 houses but had not been completely rebuilt. It had no merchants of any note but contained twenty houses of Devangas or weavers and 150 of farmers. At Kadahalli Buchanan found a sheep-fold strongly fortified by a hedge of dry thorns and containing four huts of the shepherds. These people were alarmed at the appearance of Buchanan and his party and suspecting that they came to take away their flocks for the use of the army did not approach the village that night but preferred exposing their cattle to the danger of tigers which were said to have been numerous at the time.

Nagamangala had a large, square mud fort and contained in its centre a square tower which like that of Chiknayakanahalli left room for the outer town for one street with short lanes on each side. In the inner fort were two large temples and some other religious buildings in good repair and a Mahal or palace, a catcherry or public office and several large granaries in ruins. Before the invasion of Parasuram Bhow, the place is said to have contained 1,500 houses which had been reduced to 200 at the time of Buchanan's visit scattered in the midst of ruins.

After passing through Melkote and Thonnur, Buchanan reached Seringapatam on the 1st September 1800 and remained there for four days.