

CHAPTER XL.

Land tenure—Modes of cultivation—Wages of labour— Distribution of crop.

The general tenure of land in the Mysore State did not materially differ from that prevailing in the surrounding country. It was generally accepted that the cultivators and their heirs had the right of continuing in possession of such lands so long as there was no default in the payment of the customary rent, with the implication that if the land was not cultivated the cultivator thereby rendered himself *ipso facto* unable to pay the rent and that the Government was entitled to resume the land and confer it on others. In Nagar or Bednore and Manjarabad or Ballum however, the proprietorship was regarded as vested in the landholder and was hereditary, the rent being paid in money and the officers of Government having no further interference with the ryots than to receive the rent. This system of hereditary proprietorship and fixity of rent generally attributed to Sivappa Naik a former Raja of Bednore continued in vogue till the time of Haidar. But military service was at all times an additional condition of tenure in Bednore. In 1763 when Haidar discovered the conspiracy against him mentioned in the previous pages, he commuted the military service into a money payment holding the country in subjection by a force of 25,000 men. This assessment continued till 1792, when Tippu having lost half of his territories attempted to compensate himself by a proportional increase in assessment on his remaining possessions. Purnaiya however reverted to the assessment of 1764 and continued to keep a force in that part as before.

The province of Ballum had never been effectually conquered until military roads were opened through the forests by General Wellesley in the year 1801—2. During the time of both Haidar and Tippu the land assessment had fluctuated and the presence of an army was always necessary to enforce payment of revenue. Purnaiya however fixed the land-tax at a standard which was acceptable to the landholders. This minister had an adequate idea of the advantages accruing both to the Government and to the ryot from a system of hereditary property and fixed rents instead of the

somewhat precarious tenures which prevailed at the time in other parts of Mysore. Throughout the country he also confirmed the property of the soil to the possessors of plantations of areca, cocoanut and others which were not annual. In the case of gardens and plantations however which had gone to decay or which required time for recuperation and in the case of new plantations which needed time for growth, he treated them as temporary exceptions. He showed a general disposition to accede to the proposals of individuals for fixing the rent and encouraging proprietorship of every description of land. But he did not press it as a measure of Government which the ryots always received with suspicion holding the opinion that people should be made gradually to understand and wish for such a measure before it could be conferred and received as a benefit.

The whole of the revenue was under the Amani or direct management of Government. The cultivators of dry lands paid a fixed money rent calculated to be equal to about one-third of the crop and those of the wet or rice lands paid nominally in kind of about one-half of the crop but generally paid in money at the average rates prevailing in the neighbourhood which were settled as soon as the state of the crop admitted of an estimate being made of the yield. When however the amildar and the ryot did not agree on the money payment, it was received in kind. In the central and some other parts of Mysore this mode of adjustment was found impracticable on account of the uncertain nature of the water-supply.

The mode of estimating the extent of land in Mysore was not by actual measurement but by quantity of seed-grain required to sow the land. The term 'Kandy,' a dry measure, was that which was universally applied in describing a portion of land and a 'kandy' of land signified that extent of land in which a kandy of seed-grain was sown. As however any given extent of wet land required about four times the quantity of seed that could be sown with advantage in the same extent of dry land, a kandy of dry land was four times as large as a kandy of wet land. According to Colonel Wilks, the share of the Government in the gross produce of land was about 40 per cent, while 60 per cent remained to the

cultivator to reward him for his labours and to recoup his cost. He had also the profits arising out of live-stock.

A few concrete examples chiefly taken from Buchanan's report may be given here of the distribution of produce and the modes of cultivation prevailing in different parts of the country to further elucidate what has been said above. At Seringapatam the arable lands were classed under four heads. Firstly, a very black soil containing a large proportion of clay and 'Ere' or 'Krishna' or 'Mucutu'. Secondly, a very red soil containing also a few small pebbles or loose rounded stones without injuring the quality of the land. Thirdly, 'Maralu,' a light brown-coloured soil with a large proportion of sand and fourthly, 'daray' consisting of much sand and angular nodules of stone so compact that the plough penetrated it with difficulty. The articles grown on wet lands were rice, sugarcane, 'uddu,' 'Hesaru,' 'Walle Ellu' and 'Tadagani,' rice being the most important of these. The cultivators here raised an annual crop in two different seasons of the year as it suited their convenience and these crops were known as 'Caru' and 'Hainu.' A crop grown in the rainy season was called 'Hainu' and the one grown in the dry season was called 'Caru.' The grounds were formed into terraces quite level and surrounded by little banks for the purpose of retaining water. The tanks or reservoirs not being numerous in the Patna Ashtagram and the canals being completely filled in the rainy season only, the 'Hainu' crop of rice was by far the most copious. The small supply of water in the dry season was reserved for the cultivation of sugarcane. There were three modes of sowing paddy. In the first mode the seed was sown dry on the fields known as 'Bara Bhatta' or 'punaji' cultivation. In the second mode the seed was allowed to vegetate before it was sown and the field when fitted to receive it was reduced to puddle and was known as 'Mole Bhatta' cultivation. In the third mode the seed was sown very thick in a small plot of ground and when it had shot up a foot high, the young one was planted into the fields where it was to ripen and this was called 'Nati' cultivation. Of the different kinds of rice grown, the important ones were 'Dodda Bhatta,' 'Kembuthi,' 'Yalaki Raja,' 'Dily Sanna Bhatta,' 'Putta Bhatta.'

When the paddy crop was ripe, it was cut and put into a Rasi or heap, this being marked with clay and carefully covered with straw and a trench was also dug around each heap to keep off water. For twenty or thirty days till the division of the crop between the Government and the cultivator took place, the corn was allowed to remain in the heap. By far the greater part of the land had too small a supply of water to suffice for two crops of rice and the ryots were therefore content with only one crop of rice and another of some kind of pulse or dry grain where possible. A considerable quantity of sugarcane was also raised by the farmers of Ashtagram. It was of two kinds 'Rastale' and 'Patta Patti' and from the latter was generally manufactured 'Bella' or jaggery. The 'Patta Patti' is stated to have been introduced from Arcot by Mustapha Ali Khan who during the time of Haidar was Tosheekhane Bakshi or Paymaster-General. On dry fields ragi was the commonest crop grown and it formed the staple diet of the masses. Other crops grown were 'Avare,' 'Thogari,' 'Jola,' 'Kambu,' 'Same,' 'Haraka,' 'Navane,' 'Hurali,' 'Kadale,' 'Haralu' and 'Huchellu.'

Of the gardens there were four kinds, namely, 'Tharakari Thota' or kitchen-garden, 'Thengina Thota' or cocoanut-garden containing also many other kinds of fruit trees, 'Yele thota' or betel-leaf garden and 'Huvina Thota' or flower-garden.

The cattle chiefly bred in the vicinity of Seringapatam were cows, buffaloes and the long-legged goats. Horses, pigs and the common goat were in too small a number. The oxen that were bred were by no means numerous enough for the use of the cultivators. The supply came chiefly from Alumbady, Tirupattur, Cowdahalli, Kankanhalli, Ramgiri and Magadi. The farmers in general kept no more stock than the number required to cultivate their lands, with a few cows or more commonly buffaloes for obtaining milk.

A great deal of attention was paid to manuring the soil. Every farmer had a dung-hill which was prepared by digging a pit of sufficient extent. In this was collected the whole of the dung

and the litter of the cattle from the houses where the cattle were kept, together with all the ashes and soil of the family. The farmers who lived within two miles of the city sent bullocks with sacks and procured from the 'Halal' or sweepers the ashes, ordure and other soil of the town. The leaves of various wild trees were also used as manure.

Near Seringapatam the farms in general extended to two or three ploughs of land. One plough was a poor stock, the possessor of 4 or 5 was a great farmer and the possession of 6 or 7 was reckoned as indicating affluence. The total want of a land measure and the scattered disposition of the plots of which each farm consisted, according to Buchanan, stood considerably in the way of exactly ascertaining the extent of a plough of land. Generally the extent of a plough land was not considerable and the ploughings given to the same field were very numerous and spread over a considerable portion of the year. A plough worked by a pair of bullocks did not generally cover daily more than one-seventh of an acre. A farmer living near the town and owning five ploughs is stated to have required about 10 servants owing to the scarcity of forage but at a distance from Seringapatam five men were deemed sufficient. In harvest and seed time more labourers were needed, chiefly women, and more bullocks also.

Instead of dividing the crops as usual in other parts of the country, the farmer at Seringapatam cultivated his watered lands as he pleased and paid for each kandaga of ground a fixed quantity of paddy. He had also to give an allowance to the gods and to the Panchangis, Talavars and other village officers in lieu of the share which they were formerly wont to receive on a division of crops. The rent of dry fields was paid in money according to an old valuation formed on an estimate of its produce. With five ploughs a man cultivated about $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres of watered land and 25 acres of dry land. The Government was bound to keep the tanks and canals in good repair.

The ryots had no property in the land. But it was not usual to send any man away so long as he paid the customary rent. The

Gowdas or village headmen here were not hereditary but were appointed by the amildar with the consent of the ryots and the amildar never put in any person contrary to the wishes of the people. The Gowdas received a fixed pay of 20 fanams or equal to about Rs. $6\frac{1}{2}$ a month and performed the functions which in other places were usually performed by the hereditary headmen of the villages.

The hire of farm-labourers at Seringapatam and generally within two miles of that place when employed throughout the year was 10 Sultani fanams or about Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$ per month. The servant lived in his own house and it was customary for the master on extraordinary occasions such as marriages to make an advance of money to the servant and this debt had to be repaid before the servant could leave his master. In case of the servant's death his sons were bound to pay the debt or to continue to work with their father's master and if there were no sons, the master could give the daughters away in marriage and receive the presents usual on such occasions. In the harvesting season the daily hire of a man was 6 seers of paddy. A woman transplanting paddy crop got daily one fourth of a Sultani Fanam or about one anna and four pies. At a distance of six or seven miles from Seringapatam the monthly hire of a servant was 8 fanams or a little less than three rupees. Farther, the hire was one fanam and eighty seers of grain, of which one half was ragi and the remainder such kind as it was convenient for the farmer to give.