

CHAPTER XLVII.

Co-operation of Mysore with the British troops in the Second Mahratta War—Bishtopunt and Govinda Rao—Governor-General's acknowledgment of the satisfactory fulfilment of the treaty obligations.

The death of Tippu and the subsequent partition of his territories relieved Lord Mornington, or Marquis Wellesley as he had now become, not only from the danger which threatened the British Power in India but also enabled him to inaugurate a change in British policy towards the Indian States by gradually extinguishing the maintenance of what was generally known as a Balance of Power. Both the Court of Directors and the Cabinet of ministers in England strictly enjoined on the Governor-General to abstain from interference in the affairs of Indian States as well as from further wars. In issuing these instructions the Cabinet and the Court of Directors were actuated by different motives. The Cabinet found that in acquisition of new territories in India there was no room for colonisation by the surplus population of England as the country had already a large population of its own and little waste space was left for new settlements. On the other hand, the Court of Directors were ever anxious to avoid extra expenditure which the waging of new wars always involved to the prejudice of high dividends to the share-holders of the Company. Marquis Wellesley was a statesman of the first order and he foresaw that it was not possible for the Company's Government to always adopt a policy of non-intervention without danger to British interests in India. He changed this policy of non-intervention in spite of the objections raised by his superiors in England to one of subsidiary alliance with the Indian States which meant that in each Indian State there was to be a British Resident, a contingent of British troops maintained at the cost of the State concerned, and the surrender into the hands of the Company's Government of the management of all external relations. The Nizam of Hyderabad was almost the first to accept this new relationship. It was calculated that as this new policy became more and more acceptable

to the native rulers all danger to the stability of the British Power in India would cease.

Marquis Wellesley's attempt to introduce the subsidiary system at Poona did not at first succeed and the Peshwa, as we have seen, not only took no active part in the war against Tippu but also refused to accept the allotment of that portion of Tippu's territory which had been reserved for him on the conditions specified by the Governor-General. His efforts to induce Dowlat Rao Scindia of Gwalior to conclude a defensive alliance with the British Government against Zaman Shah, King of Afghanistan and grandson of Ahmed Shah Abdali of Panipat fame, had equally failed. But the subsequent march of political events brought about, as will be seen later, the realisation of Marquis Wellesley's wishes in both these courts as well as in that of the Raja of Berar.

In March 1800 Nana Fadnavis the famous Mahratta minister at the court of Poona died and Baji Rao the Peshwa was thereby released from the ministerial thralldom which had become irksome to him. He then embarked on a wild career of revenge on all those who had given him offence and among the victims was a brother of Jaswanth Rao Holkar of Indore who was put to an agonising death by being dragged through the streets of Poona tied to the foot of an elephant. Jaswanth Rao Holkar upon hearing what had taken place marched on Poona to be revenged on the Peshwa. Baji Rao in consternation became now half inclined to accept the terms of the treaty offered by Marquis Wellesley but Scindia prevented the alliance for a while by despatching a large force to reassure the Peshwa. The united armies of Scindia and the Peshwa were however defeated by Jaswanth Rao Holkar and Baji Rao fled to the Western Coast and escaped on board an English ship to the port of Bassein about 20 miles northward of Bombay. Another Peshwa was set up at Poona by Jaswanth Rao and Baji Rao saw nothing but ruin before him. In this extremity he agreed to accept the obnoxious terms of the treaty which had been proposed by Marquis Wellesley provided the English restored him to his place at Poona. Accordingly the treaty of Bassein was concluded on the last day of December 1802.

Early in 1803 Baji Rao was conducted by a British force from Bassein to Poona and there he was re-established as Peshwa. At the same time an army under General Arthur Wellesley and another from Hyderabad under Colonel Stevenson were stationed in convenient situations both for Baji Rao's protection and for closely watching in the western frontiers of Hyderabad the movements of Dowlat Rao Scindia and of Raghoji Bhonsla who had together designs of establishing their supremacy at Poona. It also looked as if Scindia was making preparations to collect Chouth in the Nizam's territories. His language towards the British Government and its allies became hostile and to the British Resident he said he could arrive at no decision until he had talked the matter over with the Raja of Berar. But at the same time the attempts made by these two rulers to meet the British troops were feeble and undecided. In the meanwhile, General Arthur Wellesley who had been invested by the Governor-General with the necessary political powers insisted upon Scindia and the Berar Raja marching back to their respective dominions. But the reply was that the English ought to set the example. At last General Wellesley arranged with Stevenson to make a combined attack on the united Mahratta forces, but by some accident Wellesley alone came upon the enemy near the village of Assaye on the 23rd September 1803 in the Nizam's frontier. Though the Mahratta force largely outnumbered the British troops, General Wellesley decided to fight single-handed and by his clever manouvres gained a brilliant victory over the enemy. Thus began the second Mahratta war and ended in December of the same year 1803 by both Scindia and the Raja of Berar sustaining crushing defeats and by the consequent conclusion of peace with the British.

With the above introduction we may now proceed to indicate the extent of the co-operation afforded by the Mysore Government and the part played by the Mysore troops in the military operations during this war which, as already indicated, was one of very short duration. By the third article of the Subsidiary Treaty concluded on the 8th of July 1799 in the event of war or preparations for the same by the Company's Government with any other State or power the Raja of Mysore had been placed under an obligation to

contribute a reasonable sum of money as was determined by the Governor-General towards the increased expenses of such a war. The occasion now arose to call on the Government of Mysore to fulfil this part of their treaty obligations and Purnaiya made a ready response. From the beginning of his Dewanship he had foreseen this contingency and set aside one lakh of star pagodas annually from the State revenue to meet such charges whenever the occasion should arise. On the 31st December 1802 the Dewan was required by the Government of Madras to entertain in service all the Silledar horse in Mysore, their charges being borne by the Company's Government from the time they left the Mysore frontier till their return.

The peace establishment of Mysore at the time consisted of 1500 cavalry, 3000 regular infantry, 2500 peons in constant pay and 12000 Kandachar peons. In the first two months of the year 1803 Purnaiya succeeded in enlisting 1200 Silledar horse. Again on the 23rd August of the same year when a further requisition reached Purnaiya from the Madras Government, he enlisted 1045 Silledar horse by about the month of November. Similarly the infantry which numbered 3000 as a peace establishment and who were paid, armed and clothed in the same manner as the Company's native infantry was increased by 1026. The Kandachar Peons who were 12000 in number were increased by 1000 and an augmentation by 400 was also made of the peons in constant pay who numbered 2500 and who were usually employed to do duty with the regular infantry in the more important forts or stations or in the personal guard of the Raja, the Dewan or the principal officers of the Government. An arrangement was also made to maintain an establishment of 400 dooly-bearers who were regularly relieved, the number of 400 however being kept constant. Purnaiya also readily met all the calls made on him either for the equipment of the corps fitted out from Seringapatam, for the subsistence of the army on its march to the frontier, for the supply of the magazines formed in Mysore and of the departments of the army or for the large quantities of grain required by the cavalry. All the supplies required amounting to about 60000 bullock-loads of grain principally rice and 60000 head of sheep were furnished with a facility unknown before. Purnaiya also continued

to forward supplies to the army in the field under British commanders as fast as the Brinjaries were ready to take them away, besides sending quantities into Canara to enable the collectors there to export larger quantities for supply to other British contingents. The Dewan also took particular care to ensure regular payment of all salaries and allowances due to the Mysore troops serving in the field, with the consequence that their services were at all times available with alacrity. Purnaiya also placed a respectable body of Mysore troops at the frontier near Harihar which he supervised in person.

Turning now to the services rendered by the Mysore troops in the field, we may mention that General Wellesley expressly refers in his despatches to the creditable part taken in the military operations by the Mysore cavalry under their commander Bishtopunt at the battles of Assaye and Argaum, the latter fought on the 29th November 1803. On the 31st October 1803 the Raja of Berar detached a body of 5000 horse to intercept a convoy consisting of 14000 bullocks protected by a detachment of the British infantry and 400 Mysore horse. This convoy was attacked at a place called Unber by the Berar Raja's troops but in spite of the superiority of numbers the Raja's troops were beaten off and the convoy reached its destination safely. The Mysore cavalry also performed all the light troop duties and these duties were performed as testified by General Wellesley with the utmost cheerfulness and zeal. Another Mysore officer who won high commendation from General Wellesley for carrying on all diplomatic negotiations entrusted to him with astuteness and tact was Govinda Rao. These Mysore officers were on the recommendation of General Wellesley given by the Supreme Government life pensions of Rs. 600 and Rs. 1000 per mensem respectively.

Bishtopunt was a Mahratta Brahmin and was Sir Subha of the hill-fort of Badami in the service of the Peshwas at the time it was captured by Haidar Ali. The latter appreciating the military qualities of Bishtopunt gave him a high command in his cavalry force. At the time of the siege of Seringapatam, he had been stationed under the Karighat hill in command of a body of

Mysore horse to intercept the advance of the British army which Tippu expected would cross at a ford nearby. On the re-establishment of the old Hindu royal family on the throne, Bishtopunt was appointed Bakshi of the cavalry. He rendered very great service in the suppression of Manjarabad rebellion and had attracted the notice of General Wellesley. In the second Mahratta War Bishtopunt followed General Wellesley in command of the Mysore cavalry and at the battle of Assaye kept in effective check a large body of enemy's cavalry. At the battle of Argaum the Mysore cavalry took part in the military operations side by side with the British troops. Bishtopunt died in 1808 after a distinguished career, to the regret of Purnaiya and all those who knew him. In the Mahratta campaign Bishtopunt's situation was naturally very delicate but his discretion was equal to his military conduct in avoiding all communications and connections with the Mahratta chiefs who often with sinister motives approached him for the enlistment of his influence with the British officers on their side. Wellesley shortly after the conclusion of the Mahratta campaign acknowledged in cordial terms the excellent character and disposition of Bishtopunt under whose command he had found the Mysore cavalry of the greatest service to him.

Govinda Rao was an officer in the department of Meer Suddur under Tippu's Government and was attached to the fort of Chitaldrug. After the fall of Seringapatam, he was very useful in procuring peaceably the possession of the fort of Chitaldrug for Colonel Dalrymple. General Wellesley found him at Chitaldrug in 1800 when he passed that place in the second campaign against Dhondoji Wagh and took him along with him with the consent of Purnaiya. Subsequently Wellesley met him in the Ballum country at the commencement of the year 1802 and recommended him to the Dewan for his conduct there. In December 1802 Govinda Rao was sent by Wellesley to a number of Mahratta chiefs in the Southern Mahratta country in connection with certain matters and he conducted himself with great propriety and was found very successful on the occasion. After the Mahratta war broke out, he was invited to join General Wellesley and was employed by him as a medium of communication with the different Mahratta chiefs

and their vakeels. During the war he was placed at the head of one of the branches of the Intelligence Department which Wellesley had formed. In the negotiations for peace with Scindia and Raghoji Bhonsla he was very useful and was present at every conference that was held.

After the conclusion of the war, the question arose for settlement as to whether Mysore had fulfilled satisfactorily the financial obligations imposed on it under Article III of the Subsidiary Treaty and General Wellesley was commissioned by the Governor-General to proceed to Mysore and after consultation with Purnaiya and the British Resident to formulate his opinion. Accordingly Wellesley arrived at Mysore in July 1804 and collected the necessary information for his report. It was found that the total cost to the Mysore Government in connection with the Mahratta campaign including the amount of presents, rewards and reimbursements to the troops, gratuities and allowances on their return as well as the amount required for pay till the extra troops entertained were discharged amounted very nearly to 4,10,000 star pagodas in 1804. On account of the wise measures adopted by Purnaiya for the improvement of the resources of the country, the annual revenue which was $21\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of canteroi pagodas in 1800 had increased by 2,40,000 canteroi pagodas and Wellesley found that the Raja's Government without violating economy and without trenching on the amounts needed for the construction and repair of tanks, channels and other improvements could not maintain more than 2000 cavalry as originally fixed by Purnaiya. In these circumstances Wellesley's conclusion was that the Mysore Government had fully carried out the obligations imposed on it by the III Article of the treaty.

The Governor-General Marquis Wellesley accepted this conclusion unreservedly and in a minute dated 5th October 1804 recorded that in his opinion the Government of Mysore had fulfilled the obligations imposed upon it by the 3rd Article of the Subsidiary Treaty in the most complete and satisfactory manner. He also stated that the answer to the question as to whether that Government had completely executed its obligations was to be

determined with reference to its general exertions in support of the common cause as well as by the extent of its pecuniary contributions which, he was of opinion, was as high as could be expected at the time.

Speaking of Purnaiya, the Governor-General said :—“ To the extraordinary abilities, eminent public zeal, integrity and judgment and energy of that distinguished minister must be ascribed in a considerable degree the success of the measures which I originally adopted for the settlement of Mysore and the happy and prosperous condition of that flourishing country. The merits and services of the Dewan have been particularly conspicuous in the promptitude and wisdom manifested by him in the application of the resources of Mysore to the exigencies of the public service during the late war with the confederated Mahratta chieftains, and I deem it to be an act of justice to acknowledge that the expectations which I formed in selecting Purnaiya for the important office of minister of Mysore have been greatly exceeded by the benefits which have resulted from his excellent administration.”