

## CHAPTER LII.

### Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1811—1831.

**The disadvantages under which Krishnaraja Wodeyar laboured—Further co-operation of Mysore troops in British campaigns—Establishment of the town of Chamarajanagar.**

Never did a ruler deserve a better fate than the one which befell Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1831 when he was divested of ruling powers by Lord William Bentinck who was the Governor-General at the time, and never did a ruler more heroically struggle against this fate and ultimately vanquish it than this same Krishnaraja Wodeyar. At the time he was allowed to assume the ruling powers in 1810 by the officiating British Resident the Honourable A. H. Cole, Krishnaraja Wodeyar was, as we have seen, only 16 years old. The British Government had not the same ideas of their responsibility at the time towards the native States as they came to have subsequently. At present when the ruler of a State is a minor, it is the special solicitude of the Suzerain Government to arrange for the suitable education of the young ruler and for the efficient administration of his State during his minority. Special care is also taken when such a ruler reaches the age of majority and is invested with ruling powers by the Suzerain Government after due and formal ceremony, to keep near his person known men of ability and rectitude. No such precautions were taken when a young prince like Krishnaraja Wodeyar took the reins of Government into his hands. He was allowed to assume the administration of his State as if he succeeded to a private patrimony, by the British Resident practically on his own authority. It was fortunate that Krishnaraja Wodeyar was by nature a man of robust commonsense and goodness of heart. Nevertheless, he was utterly lacking in worldly knowledge and worldly experience and he was more or less left to himself to judge correctly the characters of the men surrounding him at a time when he most wanted honest advisers. No doubt he had received the education that was considered suitable for princes in those days. But this education by itself could not make up for his lack of

worldly knowledge and there were also not wanting men around him to exploit the inexperience of their master. It was also unfortunate that within a short interval of each other both Lakshmi Ammanni and Purnaiya departed from the scene of their labours. The former, as has been stated, died in February 1810 and from that time a party began to form itself against Purnaiya and embarked upon intrigue and calumny to oust him from his position. It was also unfortunate that Purnaiya survived but 3 months after his retirement and the benefit of his counsel became thereby denied to the young Maharaja still in the early years of his youth. It should also be stated that all the large-hearted Englishmen whose generous help and statesmanlike views had helped Purnaiya to successfully pilot the State in the first decades of the establishment of the new Mysore Kingdom had withdrawn from India. The days of the generous-minded Marquis Wellesley, of his keen-sighted brother General Wellesley, and of British Residents of the calibre of Barry Close, Webbe, Wilks and Malcolm had gone and to their place had succeeded other men who had different ideas.

Sir George Barlow was, as has been already stated, Governor of Madras at the time Krishnaraja Wodeyar assumed the administration. He was not an independent nobleman conversant with European politics but a civil servant of the Company of a pliant disposition. On receiving Cole's report as to the assumption of power by the Maharaja, Barlow's one idea was that Purnaiya should be continued as Dewan not because a man of his ability and experience was needed by the side of the Raja of as yet little worldly experience but because Purnaiya's services had been helpful to the consolidation of the British Power during the Mahratta wars. The Supreme Government in Bengal rightly accepted the Maharaja's succession to power as a mere corollary of the position in which he had been established in 1799 but took objection to it only as being the individual act of the British Resident instead of coming in the shape of a formal investiture by the Governor of Madras. Cole seems not to have regretted the retirement of Purnaiya but to have thought that the occasion afforded a good opportunity for the British representative to gain ascendancy over the young Raja's mind and thereby further

to strengthen the Raja's goodwill towards British interests. In the meanwhile, the Raja was left to his own resources and was at the same time expected to govern the country efficiently to the satisfaction of the Suzerain Government. It also happened that none of the high officers near him, namely, Bargir Bakshi Balaji Rao, Rama Rao, Govinda Rao, Himmatyar Khan and others possessed that moral courage to express freely and fearlessly their opinions which Purnaiya possessed of defying even the future Iron Duke when the latter without the previous knowledge of the Mysore Government recommended two of its officers for British pensions. At this time the Raja was also imbued by those near him with the idea of some of his predecessors having been dispossessed of their power by their ministers and of the necessity of avoiding such a contingency by asserting himself as the real ruler of the country.

The Madras Government also impressed upon their Resident that a clear distinction was to be drawn between the capacity in which the British Government acted during the Raja's minority and that in which they were placed after the Raja personally began to exercise his power. In the former period the British Government, they said, was in fact the guarantee on the part of the minor Raja for the conduct of his minister who was accountable to the British Government in that capacity and that relation having ceased, the right of interference was to be exercised only in the more delicate form of counsel and advice. Cole on finding that under the instructions issued to him his sphere of interference in the affairs of the Mysore State became considerably circumscribed surrounded himself with informers and listened also to the tales of officials in his own office, with the result that much irritation was felt by the Raja though his personal regard towards Cole did not wane. In spite of these disadvantages the Raja established a good record of work for himself and on the 30th September 1814 the Court of Directors in England observed in a despatch to the Government at Calcutta that it was highly satisfactory to know that the maturity of judgment already manifested by the Raja afforded a happy presage of the continuance of the important advantages which had resulted from the connection between the British and Mysore

Governments. It may be said here once for all that during the whole period of his life, whether in sunshine or in gloom, Krishna-raja Wodeyar never swerved from that undeviating loyalty which he regarded as due to the British Power which had established him on the throne of his ancestors.

In October 1811 the Raja paid a State visit to Bangalore with the British Resident. He was accompanied by a large number of Barr Infantry and Silledar Horse and his march partook of a triumphal progress and pleased the inhabitants of the country through which he passed. At Bangalore he was received with suitable military honours by the British representatives and on the 14th of the same month when the Raja visited the horse races that were held at the time, the townspeople both European and Indian welcomed him by giving him a grand reception in a specially erected pandal. On the 15th the Raja held a special durbar in Tippu's palace in the fort at which all the prominent Europeans with their ladies were present.

Between the years 1810-1818 the Mysore horse had again opportunities of co-operating with the British troops in some of the military campaigns of that period. In 1810 Amir Khan the Pathan free-booter professing to act in the name of Holkar but really to collect funds for the army under his command invaded Nagpur and a contingent of Mysore horse 1500 strong took part in the operations against him under the command of Barry Close and were present when Amir Khan's capital Seronje in Malwa was captured.

In January 1817 the Mysore horse was engaged in the operations against the Pindaries in the Nizam's territory. These Pindaries are described as pests to society in the early part of the 19th century. Every villain who had escaped from his creditor or was expelled for flagrant crimes or was disgusted with an honest and peaceable life was found in their ranks. These Pindaries generally invaded a country in bands varying from one thousand to four thousand men. On reaching the frontier of the country which they had marked out for their

operations, they generally dispersed in small parties of two or three hundred and advanced with such rapidity that the unfortunate inhabitants became aware of their approach only by their depredations. They were not encumbered with tents or baggages but carried only their arms and slept on their saddle cloths. Both men and horses were accustomed to long marches and they never halted except to refresh themselves, to collect plunder, or to commit the vilest outrages on the female population. They subsisted on the grain and provisions which they found in the villages, took everything that was valuable and wantonly destroyed all that they could not carry away. On the 14th January Major Robert McDowall while moving with a body of troops in the country near Beder in the Nizam's territory accompanied by a body of Mysore cavalry under Annaji Rao received information that a Pindari force was at a distance of eight miles from him. Major McDowall immediately marched with a small body of his own men and 1000 Mysore horse and surprised the Pindaries in their camp and dispersed them with considerable loss.

In November 1817 the Mysore cavalry took part in the battle of Mahidpore in which Holkar and his Pindari allies were defeated. In this battle the Mysore horse under Bakshi Bhima Rao, nephew of Bishtopunt, captured much booty in the shape of elephants, camels, jewels, horses and money valued at about twenty-six lakhs of Star Pagodās exclusive of one and a half lakhs presented to Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar. A sword and belt belonging to Holkar formed part of the capture and these were presented by Krishnaraja Wodeyar to Sir John Malcolm in acknowledgment of the kindness and consideration with which he had treated the Mysore auxiliary troops.

In the last Mahratta war when Peshwa Baji Rao on being overthrown took to flight, Sir John Malcolm pursued him with a detachment of his army in which were included 2500 Mysore horse under Bakshis Rama Rao and Bhima Rao. After the war concluded, Bakshis Rama Rao and Bhima Rao returned to their own country with the Mysore horse. Krishnaraja Wodeyar ordered a grand reception to them and conferred various marks of

honour on the two Bakshis. Two jahagirs yielding 6000 and 4000 rupees respectively per annum were conferred on them. An elephant was also presented to Rama Rao on which he was allowed to ride seated in a howdah. The Governor-General Marquis of Hastings more than once congratulated Krishnaraja Wodeyar on the splendid services rendered by the Mysore horse and a Kharita dated 27th March 1818 addressed to His Highness contained the following passage:—

“Your troops who were serving under Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop and Brigadier-General Sir John Malcolm have now reached the Deccan and most of them wish to return home. Accordingly, I take this opportunity to express my pleasure at the distinguished services rendered by the Mysore troops and on account of the zeal and sincere love shown by your Highness towards this Government and I hope that your Highness has by this time become fully aware of the success achieved by your troops along with the British forces. I am also informed by the British officers about the valour and tactfulness which your troops have shown in performing their duty which it gives me great pleasure to bring to your Highness’ notice. Bakshis Rama Rao and Bhima Rao have already won distinction and become popular, your Highness having conferred on them royal gifts in appreciation of their services. I must assure your Highness that this Government will ever keep in view the welfare and progress of your people which will, of course, bring both the Governments nearer and closer to each other.” Sir John Malcolm in his “Political History of India from 1789—1824” referring to the Mysore horse has stated that during the campaigns of 1817 and 1818 in the countries of Malwa and Rajputana they served with as much zeal, fidelity and gallantry as they had before displayed in the Deccan during the Mahratta War of 1803.

In 1821 the Maharaja went on a tour and was absent from Mysore for about three months. He visited during this period Subrahmanya, Udipi and various other religious places and returned to Mysore passing through Shimoga, Bababudan and other places. In memory of the visit to Shimoga a street in that town is

even now known as Krishnarajpet. During this period considerable support was also given to several religious institutions of all denominations and several charities were established.

It was in this reign that the town of Chamarajanagar was established in the year 1824 in memory of Chamaraja Wodeyar IX, father of Krishnaraja Wodeyar. Prior to the town being named Chamarajanagar, there existed a small village known as Arikuthara or Arakotara as commonly known and this village was rebuilt and extended on all sides with a palace and a temple in the centre and thereafter made the headquarters of a taluk and it attracted to itself much trade and many people from all sides.