

CHAPTER LIII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1811—1831.

General Administration of the State.

The form of administration of the country after Krishnaraja Wodeyar succeeded to power differed to some extent from what it was in the time of Purnaiya. Purnaiya during his period of office practically combined in himself the functions of a regent as well as those of a minister. After Krishnaraja Wodeyar began to take an active part in the administration, the Dewan's functions became limited to the nature of his office, while those of a regent during a minority came, of course, to be exercised by the Raja. The form of Government also began to partake the nature of a personal autocracy with indefinite limitations imposed only by custom or tradition or by the obligations contained in the treaty with the Suzerain Power. Krishnaraja Wodeyar throughout the period of his active rule took considerable share in the daily administration of the country, though in later years to his misfortune he came to be surrounded by a set of inefficient or self-seeking advisers.

In the opening years of his rule Krishnaraja Wodeyar was a recipient of much commendation from the British Government. On the 12th May 1811 only six months after His Highness' assumption of power, Cole informed the Madras Government that the conduct of the Raja was everything that could be expected from a sensible and grateful mind, that his attention to business was almost indefatigable and that his attachment and devotion to the British Government were not to be improved or surpassed. As an illustration, Cole quoted the case of a relation of the Maharaja whom His Highness readily discarded when it became known that that person was misusing his position on the staff of his master to his own advantage. "This was done," wrote Cole, "not from a frigid, ungracious feeling of submission to authority but as the deed of a mind grateful for instruction and confident that the Resident's advice was intended for public benefit and that he had only the Raja's interest at heart." Cole was a man of extremes however

and of a confiding nature. Being prohibited by the Madras Government from interfering in the internal affairs of the State, he began to act on the secret information received from untested private sources and to represent the Raja as extravagant and indolent. Even Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras, was led away by these accounts and in writing to the Marquis of Hastings on the affairs of India generally in 1817 mentioned that the Raja of Mysore was indolent and prodigal and had already, besides the current revenue, dissipated about 60 lakhs of pagodas of the treasure laid up by the late Dewan, regarding the existence of which Munro himself came to feel doubts later.

The daily routine of business for the Raja commenced with a perusal of all the letters handed over to him by the Anche Bakshi or head of the postal department. On many of these letters, immediate orders where possible were recorded. Where however the letters dealt with matters of importance, they were reserved for consideration and consultation with the ministers. The Anche Bakshi was also helpful to His Highness in other ways. It was part of his duty to obtain information of what was going on in the districts from the Anche Mutsaddies or postal officials in the taluks and to report to the Huzur (His Highness) the contents of the communications he was daily receiving. The Anche Mutsaddies in addition to their duties of receiving and transmitting letters were also charged with the duty of reporting to headquarters the general state of the country as it fell within their observation and also forwarding complaints regarding other officials conveyed to them by private people either orally or in writing. An express tappal reached Mysore from Shimoga in 40 hours, but the time ordinarily taken was two days for a distance of about 260 miles. Sometimes when urgency arose to send the post expeditiously, more runners were employed as well as riders on camels. In this way all events of importance occurring in outside places became known at the capital within a short period of their occurrence.

After the Maharaja who, of course, had no compeers, the official gradation in the rising order was Amildar, Foujdar and Dewan. The duties of the Amildar consisted in annually arranging

for the cultivation of lands. They were required to constantly visit the villages and after disposing of such lands as readily fetched money-rents distributed the remaining land for Batayi or crop-sharing cultivation. It was to be their particular care to see that all lands under tanks were duly cultivated and they were required to use every means in their power to produce a good harvest and to prevent any loss of revenue which otherwise might be caused. Under the Amildar in each taluk there were a number of Shekdars or Revenue Inspectors whose duties were to collect the revenue, to superintend the cultivation and to provide supplies. The Foujdar was expected to attend to the complaints of the ryots and to realise the collections at stated periods of payment. When there was a decrease in the revenue, it was the duty of the Foujdar to institute an enquiry and to enter in the accounts what had been omitted and to make all necessary remissions of revenue. If there were robberies committed or any disturbances in the district, it was the Foujdar's business to proceed thither with some troops and to make the necessary arrangements to quell them.

The Raja held the seal but the Dewan was the official head of the general administration. Whenever appointments of amildars had to be made, if the Dewan happened to be at the headquarters he submitted to His Highness the names of persons whom he recommended for the office and brought the nominees before His Highness who examined them and gave neroops of appointment. When the Dewan was not at headquarters, he wrote arzees stating that he had appointed certain amildars and sheristadars who were the assistants of amildars and requesting neroops of sanction. Whenever also the Dewan intimated that he had removed any persons for any offences and had appointed others in their stead, neroops were accordingly sent.

Finance.

The finances of the State were classified under two heads—Ayne and Sivayi Jemma as in the days of Purnaiya. The Ayne consisted of all prescribed items of revenue, such as Land Revenue, Sayer, Excise, Forest, Bajebab or miscellaneous taxes. The Sivayi Jemma consisted of items such as unclaimed property, amounts realised by

the sale of women who had forsaken their husbands, fines collected, amounts realised by the sale of stray cattle, nuzerana or presents, the value of grain belonging to the lapsed jahagirs, embezzled money recovered, unauthorised appropriations of money and bribes taken. Sometimes certain of these items were classed under a sub-head known as Pattawalli, especially items relating to official corruption. Stamps for revenue purposes were for the first time introduced in the year 1828.

The noticeable heads of expenditure were :—

1. Subsidy.
2. Sowar.
3. Barr.
4. Adalat.
5. Palace.
6. Attawane or Revenue Branch.
7. Kandachar or Police Branch.
8. Anche or Post.
9. Amrut Mahal or Cattle Department.
10. Foujdaries.
11. Dewan's Office.
12. Tosheekhane or Jewellery and Presentation Department.
13. Khazana or Treasury.
14. Collection of taxes.
15. Mutfarkhath or Miscellaneous.
16. Stipends to palegars.
17. Muzrai.
18. Maramat or Public Works.

Criminal trials and punishments.

The Amildars examined all criminals who were in custody and sent up the proceedings to the Huzur with a letter. If they received instructions to send the prisoners to the Adalat Court or Committee Cutcherry as it was popularly called, they did so. If

however the orders were to keep the prisoners in confinement at the spot, they were conformed to. Sometimes the prisoners were ordered to be sent to Kabballoorg. In a case of murder the Amildar in the presence of some of the principal men of the place formed a Panchayet and examined the witnesses. If the murder was proved, a report of the same was made to the Huzur and when an order arrived to inflict punishment on them, the same was carried into effect. In the meanwhile, the prisoners were detained in irons. All the members of the court signed the proceedings. There were no regulations defining the number of days during which the prisoners were to be kept in confinement. In cases where murder was proved, the culprits were in some cases hanged and in some cases imprisoned for life. Brahmins were not hanged nor women of any caste whatsoever. But they were kept in confinement from one to three years and then released. It was usual on the opening day of the Dasara festival when the Maharaja took his seat on the throne for the relations interested in the condemned men to place themselves before His Highness in the open yard below and vociferously intercede for the release of the prisoner and obtain either a pardon or a reduction of sentence as it pleased His Highness at the time to grant.

In cases of burglary or highway robbery the prisoners were tried by the Amildar with the help of a Panchayet. At the trial the person robbed gave a list of goods stolen from him. If it was proved that the articles mentioned had been sold by the prisoner or had been found on his person, the Panchayet gave a verdict accordingly and the proceedings were forwarded to the Huzur. The articles were restored to the person robbed and the thieves kept in confinement, some being imprisoned in the hillforts, while some were put to labour on the roads. In the case of prisoners confined in forts, on the Killedar reporting that the sentence against a prisoner had expired, an order was sent from the Huzur for the release of the culprit. In a case of theft or affray the patels summoned the parties and if the case proved to be one of minor importance, the offender was dismissed with a caution, but if aggravated, the delinquent was entrusted to the custody of the menials of the village. If the matter fell within the jurisdiction of the

Shekdar, the prisoner was placed in confinement, put in stocks or was given corporal punishment. But if it was beyond his jurisdiction, the prisoner was forwarded to the Amildar. The Foujdar also had power to inflict corporal punishment, to place the prisoners in confinement and to impose fines in all cases that came before him. No person but the Raja had authority to order capital punishment. No regulations existed clearly defining the powers of each authority dealing with these matters. The rule however was that murder, highway or other aggravated robberies were to be reported to the higher authorities and this was well understood throughout the country. When a prisoner was apprehended in a taluk and sent to the Committee Cutcherry or Adalat Court, an enquiry was made by that court but His Highness gave the decision.

Civil Disputes.

Civil disputes were referred for settlement either to the village Patel, Shekdar, to an assembly of Brahmins or of merchants, to the priests, to the Amildar, to the Foujdar, to the Adalat Court or to the Kotwal. There was also another system according to which disputes were referred to a court of Panchayet by whom an enquiry was held and a decision arrived at. The plaintiff and the defendant were then required to exchange Fareekhats (deeds of release or discharge) being first signed by all the members of the Panchayet. If the parties were not satisfied with the first Panchayet, they were at liberty to appeal to a second.

When a person instituted a suit against another, he was obliged except in case of a Government official to go to the defendant's place of residence to have it settled. No fees were levied in these cases. But when a decision was passed, it was usual for the parties to offer a sacrifice to the deity.

When a person repaired to a village with a complaint against any individual, the headman of the village summoned a Panchayet and gave instructions to investigate the matter in dispute. The Panchayet consisted of ten persons, some being chosen by the plaintiff, some by the defendant and some conjointly. The Panchayet then required both plaintiff and defendant to give a

written or verbal agreement to abide by their decision, after which the plaintiff's case was first heard and sometimes taken down in writing. Next the defendant was heard in like manner. Witnesses were also heard and any further enquiry that was necessary was made. If a witness was not present, he was either sent for or a written statement of his evidence accepted. The mutual Fareekhats were then duly signed and interchanged, the members of the Panchayet having affixed their several signatures in testimony of their assent to the recorded decision. In cases in which decisions had been given by public officers an appeal lay from the Shekdar to the Amildar, from the Amildar to the Foujdar, from the Foujdar to the Adalat Court and finally from that to the Huzur.

During Purnaiya's administration the Adalat Court consisted of a Bakshi and some persons to assist him. Their form of proceeding was very similar to that of a Panchayet having no particular regulations to guide them. But in the Raja's time Bakar Ali Khan being appointed Bakshi, the evidence and decision were written and recorded and the Company's regulations relating to these matters partially put in force.