

CHAPTER LVII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1811—1831.

The outbreak of insurrection and its contributory causes.

The agrarian discontent due to the abuse of the Sharat system first showed itself in the Nagar Division. There were a number of contributory causes also which gave an impetus to the rising in this part of the country. Through Bakshi Rama Rao's influence both when he was Foujdar of Nagar as well as after he became attached to the court of Krishnaraja Wodeyar in various capacities all the important situations in the Foujdari had come to be occupied, as we have seen, by his relations belonging both to his own family as well as the Annigere and Hanagal families and a family party was thus formed with powerful interests of their own and this party continued to maintain its position till the beginning of the insurrection in 1830. Many of the members of this party were, it was believed, given to commit embezzlements and frauds of various kinds and were also suspected of being in league with gangs of robbers who had sought asylum in the jungles in that part of the country. In the village of Chetnahalli in the Honnali taluk some families of Thugs or Phasegars as they were locally called had settled for several years and about the year 1820 a great number more came from the southern Mahratta country and joined their comrades at the same village and settled also in the neighbourhood. Another still more numerous gang from North Arcot and the neighbourhood of Bangalore settled at Luckwalli situated at some distance from Tarikere. Among these people were found some of the most notorious robbers who were suspected of receiving encouragement from the members of the above powerful family. As an instance it may be stated that in January 1827 a rich merchant's house in the town of Yedehalli (now called Narasimha rajapur) was broken into, several persons were killed, and property was carried off to the amount of about three lakhs and a half of rupees and at the time the belief prevailed throughout the country that the gang of robbers employed on this occasion was directed by Annigere Venkata Rao, Amildar of Chennagiri, supported by hi

relative Hanagal Krishna Rao, then Foujdar of Nagar. This belief among the people as well as the frequent gang robberies that occurred in various parts of the country accelerated the occurrence of the agrarian revolt on a wider scale than it would have been otherwise possible.

In 1825 Survotham Rao a relation of Rama Rao who was Foujdar of Nagar at the time was removed from his office and the place was given first to Venkataraj Urs and then to his brother Thimmapparaj Urs who between them occupied the place for about 13 months and then retired on account of ill-health. It was now considered expedient to appoint Hanagal Krishna Rao, Bakshi Rama Rao's nephew, as Foujdar and the Bakshi himself was at the same time deputed to the Nagar Division to make inquiries into and settle the outstanding balances of revenue which had accumulated to upwards of thirteen lakhs of rupees. The Bakshi after enquiry made large remissions amounting nearly to Rs. 7½ lakhs and also prepared a list of the balances to be recovered and gave it to his nephew for action. Krishna Rao however showed no activity in the collection of the recoverable dues and in December 1828 he was replaced by Veeraraj Urs.

Veeraraj Urs after he took charge of the Nagar Foujdari began to question some of the remissions granted by Rama Rao which alarmed the ryots and also to enquire closely into several of the balances outstanding against the amildars appointed during the time of Survotham Rao causing dissatisfaction among them. There was now a combination of the relations of both Survotham Rao and Rama Rao and they created various obstacles in the way of Veeraraj Urs recovering any portion of the balances. At the same time Veeraraj Urs became odious to the ryots as under his orders many of them were forced to take up waste lands for cultivation though not possessed of adequate means to do so.

At about this time when much discontent prevailed in the Nagar Division, there appeared two leaders who for their own purposes not only stimulated the discontent but also incited others to join the seditious movement. The first was one Hygamalla

a cultivator by occupation and who calling himself Budi Basappa advanced a claim to the Gadi of Nagar as being the adopted son of the last Raja of Nagar. In reality, however, he was an imposter and was a native of the village of Cheenikatte near Honnali where his mother and elder brother lived.

From his early boyhood Hygamalla had led a wandering life and had found agreeable comrades among the Thugs who lived in the neighbourhood of his native village. Before he was twenty years old, he had been convicted of robbery and had served a term of imprisonment for two years in South Canara. After his release, he applied for a passport to go to his native village and was supplied with one bearing the seal of the Zilla court in which he was described by the designation he had given himself as "Budi Basappa, Nagar Khavind." On the death of the last Raja of Nagar, a Jangam by name Vasanthiah who was the friend and spiritual guide of that Raja had removed himself to a village in the Kumsi taluk with the seal-ring of the Raja in his possession. Hygamalla after his release engaged himself as a servant of this Jangam and continued in his employ till his master died some years later, when he appropriated to himself all his master's property including the seal-ring. He now began to wander about the country exhibiting the passport as a sannad given by the Company's Government recognising his claim to the Gadi of Nagar and successfully practising on the ignorance and credulity of the people around him collected a following among the restless characters in the Nagar Division as well as in the neighbouring British districts. It also happened at this time that Lakshman Rao brother-in-law of Bakshi Rama Rao who was Amildar of Anawutty began to give open support to this pretender with the object of replacing Veeraraj Urs by a more acceptable person in the Foujdari.

In April 1830 in his capacity as Amildar, Lakshman Rao issued an order to the patel of Arehalli village in these words:—
 "Whereas Srimanth Nagar Khavind, the wealthy or prosperous Raja of Nagar is about to celebrate his marriage in your village, you will supply him with every requisite furnishing him with the

usual articles free of payment. You will personally attend him and see the ceremony duly performed." Subsequently in April 1830 a mock-political ceremony also took place at which a number of village headmen and Government officials were present, when this pretender was installed as the Raja of Nagar. The next move of Hygamalla was to send secret emissaries to various people in the country inviting them to support his cause and promising them the full remission of all the balances and a reduction of the Government demand on their lands to only one rupee for each pagoda they then paid if they espoused his cause and assisted him to regain what he claimed as his hereditary kingdom.

The second person who gave support to the discontent of the ryots was Rangappa Naik, head of the Tarikere palegar's family. It was usual at that time to require all the displaced palegars or their descendants to reside at the capital of the State. Accordingly this Rangappa Naik lived at Mysore. Becoming aware of the discontent in the Nagar Division, he obtaining permission on the pretext of a marriage at Tarikere left Mysore, at the same time informing the British Resident that he had been obliged to leave Mysore on account of harassment from his creditors and that he was willing to reside at any other place. On reaching Tarikere he falsely informed the people of the villages that the Maharaja of Mysore with the assent of the Company had given back his ancestral territory to him for the purpose of establishing order and tranquillity and that if they assisted him in that task he would remit a part of the taxes, but that if they refused him aid he would plunder their houses and punish them in other ways and that they had no reason to be apprehensive of any ulterior danger to themselves as he had also the Company's authority to act as he did. Many of the patels and ryots joined him from fear, while others including a large number recruited in the British districts joined him with the prospect of enriching themselves by plunder.