

CHAPTER LXV.

Briggs' differences with the Madras Government and his resignation.

Colonel Briggs, as already said, reached Bangalore on the 25th December 1831 where according to the directions given him by the Governor of Madras he was to remain and meet C. M. Lushington the Junior Commissioner. Briggs on arrival at Bangalore found that Lushington was suffering from gout, aggravated by the fatigue of his journey from Mysore. He had brought away from Mysore all the establishments he considered necessary and had with the Governor's consent already appointed Venkataramaniah, who was formerly Foujdar of Nagar, as Dewan. During the 3 months of his sole administration, not much progress had been made in the suppression of the insurrection. At the same time, several of the changes he had introduced in the administration of the country had tended to create considerable confusion. He had abolished the only court of justice in the country and had been forbidden by the Madras Government to establish another. He had discharged a whole regiment of cavalry maintained under the terms of the treaty. He had also withheld all the pensions to Tippu's relations and to the old servants of the days of Tippu Sultan and Purnaiya. He had also suspended the payment of all charitable and religious grants and had sequestrated all the jahagirs and inam lands throughout the country until their title deeds could be examined. Briggs found as a consequence that about 9000 influential families had been reduced to great straits and were threatened with ruin. More than a year's pay was due to all the establishments, military and civil. Complaints reached almost every day against the corrupt and cruel amildars appointed or maintained by the new Dewan under the influence and with the support of the Residency party. There were more than 2000 untried prisoners in the jails.

Lushington only remained a fortnight at Bangalore after Briggs joined his post and then returned to Madras. Immediately before his departure, he publicly recorded his opinion in spite of the

Governor-General's decision that it was desirable the Commissioners were to act the part of the Resident with the new Dewan as the actual executive head of the administration, and the new Dewan was at the same time told that he was to have full powers such as Purnaiya had exercised, subject to the supervision of the Commissioners. Briggs did not agree with these views of Lushington and he emphatically declared that the British Commission was intended to represent the Maharaja and that it was to be both a deliberative and an executive body possessing complete authority and bearing the sole responsibility and that the Dewan was with respect to the Commissioners a subordinate and ministerial officer. Colonel Briggs recommended the adoption of three measures for establishing contentment and business regularity—i. a loan in order that the unruly troops and public servants might be relieved and brought to order; ii. an act of general amnesty and oblivion; and iii. a careful scrutiny and revision of the administrative personnel.

None of these recommendations met with the approval of the Madras Government, the Governor even going to the length of declaring that they were presumptuous. Briggs was also expressly forbidden to interfere with the Dewan's administration or with any of his appointments. In a despatch dated the 17th February 1832 the Government of Madras declared that without the Governor's sanction no measures were to be adopted to revive either the highest court of Justice or any other court which was not in operation in 1804. Whatever changes might have been subsequently made were to be regarded as excrescences not originating with or known to Sir Barry Close or Webbe who, it was said, possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the Hindu institutions. Authority to be efficient, the despatch continued, must be single and that the Commissioners could best uphold their own by maintaining that of the Dewan, so long as he was recognised in that character by the British Government. In a despatch dated the 28th February 1832 the Governor praised the manly independence with which the Dewan denied the sinister motives imputed to him by Colonel Briggs and declared that having then before him conflicting statements from public functionaries each in his own sphere exercising a high office and entitled to the confidence of

Government he must wait for the opinion of the newly appointed Junior Commissioner then on his way to Bangalore before deciding between the views of the Dewan and those of the Senior Commissioner. The new Junior Commissioner G. D. Drury having in the meantime joined his post, a further despatch dated 19th March 1832 directed that in the event of a difference of opinion between the Commissioners they were to record their opinions separately for the consideration of the Madras Government, but in any matter requiring immediate decision the views of the Dewan and those of the Commissioner agreeing with him were to be adopted. The position of Briggs became intolerable, the Junior Commissioner including J. M. Macleod the successor of G. D. Drury and who also was a Madras Civilian more or less always opposing Briggs.

Briggs now tendered his resignation of his office expressing himself in these words:—"In the enjoyment of the confidence of the Madras Government and of the Resident, in the full exercise of a power with which I am forbidden to interfere, with all the public servants of the State from the Foujdar of a district to the messenger of an office looking up to him for subsistence and promotion, the Dewan keeps up an active system of espionage and maintains an extensive secret correspondence. Instead of my being able to transact public business with composure, my whole time has been taken up in endeavouring to counteract the plots of the Dewan to keep me in the dark." While tendering his resignation, Briggs proposed at the same time to the Governor-General that there should be a single Commissioner for the administration of Mysore. Lord William Bentinck however was not disposed to accept the suggestion of Briggs and in November 1832 he was transferred to Nagpur as Resident, his place being given to Lt.-Col. W. Morison who was Resident in Travancore.

Colonel Briggs who possessed a masterful personality and extraordinary courage of conviction in a note which he recorded later left his impressions of these events in these words:—"The cause of all the troubles throughout my Senior Commissionership was an unfortunate want of singleness of purpose in several quarters..... Lushington wanted Mysore for his brother

and never forgave me for standing in his way. The Governor-General, as I did not understand till lately, was excessively anxious from the first and all through the business to screen the Resident Casamaijor an old protege and favourite of his own, so that while his despatches demonstrated that gentleman's incapacity to the perception of the Court of Directors, he still supported him both publicly and privately and was glad to get me out of the way, because I frankly avowed my aversion to the Residency party and my conviction that they were answerable for the misrule of Mysore."