

## CHAPTER LXXII.

**Bowring's assumption of charge as Commissioner—His early career—Interview with the Maharaja—Mysore becomes a Regulation Province under Bowring—Inspection of offices and their reorganisation—Prince Gulam Muhammad's charity.**

Lewin Bentham Bowring who was appointed Commissioner of Mysore and Coorg in succession to Sir Mark Cubbon was not able to join his new post till April 1862. At the time of his appointment he was private secretary to Lord Canning and it took some time for him to be relieved of his duties there and in the meanwhile, C. B. Saunders, the Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, acted for him as Commissioner. Bowring was born in 1824 and was a son of Sir George Bowring. He was educated at Exeter, Leipzig and Hailebury. He joined the Bengal Civil Service in 1843. He was Assistant Resident at Lahore in 1847 and was a Deputy Commissioner in the Punjab from 1849-54. His next post was that of private secretary to the Governor-General Lord Canning from 1858-62, when he became Commissioner of Mysore. He continued to serve the Mysore State till 1870 with an interval of a year's leave in 1866-67, when Saunders again acted for him. In 1867 Bowring was created a C. S. I.

In April 1862 Bowring left Calcutta and arriving at Madras started for Bangalore on the 20th of that month. The railway line had not been fully opened up to Bangalore at the time and as a consequence he had very trying experiences of his journey entailing, as he himself said at the time, 'eight hours grilling on the railway line and fourteen hours severe jolting in the hearse-like transit carriages.' After assuming charge of his new appointment, he inspected on the 24th April the headquarter offices located in Haidar's palace in the fort of Bangalore and found the building in a somewhat dilapidated condition. There was treasure to the extent of one million rupees and Bowring found that this large amount of money was in sole charge of a treasurer who furnished no security except his reputation for honesty. The revenue office

was found to be in good order and the taluk accounts were also found very creditably kept. The officers employed at the time were Mahratta Brahmins who, Bowring noticed, did not like the Kanada language which was substituted for use in place of Marathi during the previous regime. Bowring was introduced to the officers of the Huzur Adalat and was, as he said, amused to see a regular Your Worship kind of bench with a dock and a witness-box with a magnificent red punkah over the bench. On visiting the jail, Bowring found that all the prisoners were chained together at night, so that one man could not get up without awaking all the rest of the gang. Another glaring defect he found was that there was no separate lock-up for women, there being only a separate room the approach to which was the same as that of the rest of the wards.

Bowring next went to Mysore and on the 30th April had an interview with the Maharaja in the palace in the fort at Mysore. He was escorted from his residence to the palace by a body of men belonging to the Maharaja's household consisting of horsemen and footmen, spearmen and swordsmen dressed in bright colours. On arrival at the palace, he was conducted to the reception room. Bakshi Narasappa the principal palace officer was present on the occasion. The Maharaja received Bowring very politely and made a number of complimentary remarks. The Viceroy's khareetha informing His Highness of Bowring's appointment as Commissioner was received with all honours, attar and pan were then exchanged and a salute was fired. Bowring again visited Mysore in July following and on better acquaintance found the Maharaja wonderfully posted with all that passed in his territory. At this time in conversation with the Commissioner, the Maharaja expressed himself much pleased at the idea of small irrigation works being restored to the control of the revenue authorities from whom they had been taken away sometime ago and transferred to the Engineering Department which the Maharaja did not like. Bowring agreed with the observations of the Maharaja and repeating the words of a distinguished British engineer Colonel Strachey said that it was quite as absurd to call in a first class engineer to repair the bund of a pond as to summon an architect to put in a pane of glass in a broken window. In connection with another subject the

rise of prices, Bowring found that the Maharaja would not look at it entirely through the glasses of the western political economists and when the former told him that the ryots were many times better off than they were, His Highness at once replied: "How can that be. Things were cheap and now they are dear, while I find all my servants leaving me because the coffee planters and executive engineers give them double wages."

Bowring's administration in Mysore was chiefly noted for the large number of departmental reforms introduced by him which gave the Government its modern colour. The more or less paternal despotism of Cubbon's days no longer suited the spirit of the new age which had after the Indian Mutiny opened everywhere in India from the time of the assumption in 1858 by the British Crown of the government of the country from the hands of the East India Company. Mysore at the time of Bowring's assumption of office was what was called in official parlance a Non-Regulation province to which the Regulations and Acts in force in the Regulation Provinces had not been extended, in which fewer officers were employed and in which executive and judicial functions were to a great extent exercised by the same persons. The principal personnel of Government under the British Commission at the time when Bowring began his administration consisted of the Commissioner's staff at headquarters, four Superintendents one posted to each of the divisions of the Mysore territory, three assistants, ten junior assistants to the Superintendents of Divisions, and the court of Huzur Adalat consisting as it did at the time of 3 judges with lesser powers.

Bowring during his time re-distributed Mysore into three divisions in place of four and these three were subdivided into eight districts. He also established, besides revising the previously existing revenue and judicial agencies, a department of accounts, a department for registration of documents, an establishment for the survey and settlement of lands, and another for the investigation of Inam tenures. There were also separate staffs of engineers for irrigation and for ordinary public works, with additional establishments for the conservancy of channels and for the scrutiny of public

works accounts and a distinct department for the working and conservancy of forests. A new police system was introduced and a large medical staff was in charge of the jails and hospitals and also attended to sanitary concerns, while vital interests of towns were attended to by newly formed municipal corporations. For diffusion of knowledge a larger educational agency came into being. The military force was placed under a European officer belonging to the British army. The effect of these improvements was to increase the number of the superior grade officers from about thirty in the days of General Cubbon to 135, out of which less than thirty subordinate appointments exclusively in the revenue and judicial departments were held by natives, while the remainder were held by Europeans. In 1869 the designations of Superintendents of Divisions and of Deputy Superintendents of districts were changed to those of 'Commissioners' and 'Deputy Commissioners,' while the head of the administration was designated Chief Commissioner.

In 1865 Harihar which was a military station till then was abandoned by the British troops, the only other stations existing being Bangalore and French Rocks. In October 1862 Bowring expressed the opinion that the native infantry regiment of British troops located at French Rocks would not be readily available in case any disturbance arose at Mysore, because the Kaveri river intervened between the two places and there was the danger of one or the other of the bridges being destroyed. On the other hand, if the regiment was stationed at Mysore, the Superintendent of the Division could, when necessary, immediately call upon the regiment for help and avert any disturbance. The Government of India accepted Bowring's idea and the construction of the new military lines on a site at a distance of about two miles to the north of the Mysore city was begun and completed in 1864, when the regiment occupied the same. It was however later found that the health of the troops suffered considerably by the change and they were ordered back to their old lines at French Rocks.

#### **Finance.**

In the year 1861-62 when Bowring assumed the administration, the total revenue of the State amounted to a little over 100 lakhs of

rupees per year and in 1865-66 it reached Rs. 109 lakhs, the land revenue amounting to Rs. 77½ lakhs. The expenditure of the State generally was Rs. 85 lakhs including subsidy (24½ lakhs), allowance to the Maharaja (Rs. 12 lakhs), military expenditure (Rs. 11 lakhs), religious endowments (Rs. 3½ lakhs) and Civil expenditure (Rs. 34 lakhs). Early in 1864 the British Indian currency notes were introduced into circulation for the first time. Though, strictly speaking, a currency note was cashable by the Government only at the place of its issue, yet in Mysore in order to instil confidence in the minds of the people Bowring ordered all notes of Rs. 100 and lower in value to be cashed at the taluk treasuries if they had funds. The notes were also ordered to be accepted in payment of Government revenue, so that they might gradually get into circulation.

Bowring was at first opposed to the annual budget system of receipts and expenditure which the Government of India wanted to be introduced in Mysore. He failed to see, he said, the use of a budget estimate when Mysore had nothing to do with other provinces and any surplus remaining belonged to that Government only. All that was required, according to him, was that there was to be a surplus at the end of the year. After he gained some experience of the budget system however, Bowring became convinced of its utility and thereafter willingly followed the procedure prescribed by the Government of India.

#### **Muzrai.**

In 1866 the Government of India observed that although the peculiar circumstances under which Mysore was administered rendered it necessary that certain classes of acts were required to be performed which would not be thought of in a purely British province, yet where such acts were connected with idolatrous buildings and practices there seemed no reason why any Christian officer of Government or any Government officer as such should be called upon to perform them. Accordingly in 1867 the Muzrai Department was placed in charge of a Native Assistant in each district.

The public offices at Bangalore were built between 1864-68 at a cost of Rs. 4½ lakhs and the headquarter offices of the British

Commission which had been located for 37½ years in Haidar's palace in the Bangalore fort were transferred to the new buildings in the year 1868.

#### **Forest Conservancy.**

The systematic conservancy of forests began during the regime of Bowring. In 1863-64 the Forest Conservancy Department was established and its control was gradually extended over all the forests of the State. Some arrangements for the protection of forests existed previous to 1862-63. But before the formation of the Forest Department in that year, the forests of the three divisions were worked on various systems and the only general rule was that any agriculturist who required any wood other than teak or sandal could obtain it on payment of a prescribed seigniorage. The first operations of this department consisted of the preparation of two lists of reserved trees, the first including 15 kinds declared to be absolutely the property of Government, to fell which wherever they grew either ryot or trader had to obtain a licence on payment of certain fixed rates. The second list consisted of 27 kinds of trees reserved from the trader but free to the ryot for his own use provided they grew within his own taluk. All kinds of trees not named in these two lists were free to ryots but could be felled by traders only on payment of a fee. In 1869 new rules were brought into operation providing for the formation of State and district forests. The first were placed under the sole management of the Forest Department, while the last were left under the revenue authorities. Ryots were allowed unreserved wood and bamboos free of duty for agricultural purposes but had to pay a duty when they required wood for house-building purposes.

During Bowring's administration, in the year 1865 the harvest was scanty but it was confined for the most part to the Chitaldrug district and the taluks on the north-eastern borders of the State in Tumkur and Kolar. The tanks became generally dry and the early or Kartik crop of rice was more or less a failure involving a loss of Rs. 3 lakhs out of a land revenue of Rs. 75 lakhs. Earlier, large quantities of stored-up grain had been exported to Bellary and Dharwar where the cultivation of cotton had replaced that of food

crops on account of the large demand for the former article stimulated by short supplies from the United States of America caused by the civil war there and thereby the stocks of grain in Mysore became low. The price of common rice rose to  $6\frac{1}{4}$  seers per rupee and that of ragi to  $10\frac{3}{4}$  or nearly four times the usual prices. In 1866 there was serious alarm in the State on account of the Mungar or early rainfall being unsatisfactory. In June of this year the distress was very severe. It was reported that many people subsisted on ground flour of the kernels of tamarind fruit and cotton seed as well as on leaves and roots, especially the root of the aloe. The Government at this period had no clear policy to afford relief to the sufferers when a famine or scarcity prevailed in the country. It may be noted that when a committee was formed at Bangalore to buy grain cheap and sell it retail at cost price, the Commissioner refused to assist them in their object by any grant of public money or to allow any Government officer to hold a place on the committee for fear of violating the principles of free trade.

An event connected with this period was the establishment of a charity by Prince Gulam Muhammad, the last surviving son of Tippu in November 1868. The Commissioner of Mysore for the time being was constituted the trustee of the fund and a sufficient sum of money invested in 4 per cent Government paper yielding about Rs. 500 monthly for distribution among the poor of Mysore the country of his birth. The charity was to be disbursed in sums of three rupees each per month to one hundred poor Mahomedans, fifty Native Christians and twenty Brahmins of the town and suburbs of Mysore. This charity which is in operation even at the present day did credit to his broad-mindedness and the innate love he bore for the country of his birth, though he had left it when quite a child in 1800. This Prince, it may be stated, died in 1877. Lord Lawrence the Governor-General claimed him as an intimate friend of his and bore testimony to the many excellent virtues he possessed.