

CHAPTER LXXVII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar's early attempts for reinstatement—Court of Directors shift ground—Lord Dalhousie's desire to annex Mysore—Dalhousie's visit to Mysore—His minute to apply the Doctrine of Lapse to Mysore.

As has been stated in a previous chapter, Krishnaraja Wodeyar accepted the decision of the Court of Directors communicated in September 1835 by Lord Auckland the successor of Bentinck in the full belief that at no distant date he would receive back his kingdom. The Court of Directors stated that it was desirable for the British Government to continue in possession of the whole State until such salutary rules and safeguards were matured and confirmed in practice as would afford just grounds of confidence that the Maharaja's subjects in all parts of his dominions would possess the stable form of a good Government. On receipt of Lord Auckland's communication, the Maharaja raised the question as to who was to judge when the time for restoration arrived and whether the reports of the officers of the British Commission whose employment would be lost by the transfer of the country to him were to be the guide.

The Maharaja waited patiently for over 8 years but found no indication of the restoration of the country to him. He then applied to Lord Ellenborough shortly before his departure from India to reinstate him in power, the state of the country, its revenue and its peaceful condition warranting him to make such a request. On Sir Henry Hardinge succeeding Lord Ellenborough, the Maharaja repeated his application for restoration. His Highness now urged that as 13 years had elapsed since the assumption of the country by the British Government it was a fair presumption that all salutary rules and safeguards had been matured and confirmed in practice and that therefore the time had arrived for the restoration of the State to him. The Maharaja also urged that towards the debt due to the Madras Government there had accumulated a sum of nearly Rs. 25 lakhs in the State treasury and that he would

supplement the balance from his private funds for obtaining a complete discharge. "I cannot however refrain," said His Highness, "from expressing my surprise that the money in the treasury has been permitted to accumulate and to lie useless and thus the payment of the dues of the British Government allowed to be postponed, at the same time interest being paid for the sum of a little over 32 lakhs advanced by that Government."

Not having received any reply for several months to the above appeal, the Maharaja in June 1845 again urged on the Governor-General's attention the justice of his claim and the opportuneness of his request for restoration. He protested strongly against the systematic misrepresentation of his character by interested persons both in England as well as in India and referred to the testimony of those who knew him intimately as to his being at that time in full mental and physical vigour quite capable of ruling his country as any man of 50 years of age and that no fresh reason had been adduced to withhold the government of his country from him. The treaty existing between the British Government and himself, he said, fully justified his request,—a treaty which he never violated in the slightest particular or degree and which the British Government was bound in honour to abide by and to fulfil which only one of the contracting parties had power.

There was an intermediate enquiry in November 1845 from the Court of Directors as regards the amount of debt still due from Mysore to the British Government. In his reply to this enquiry in August 1846 Sir Henry Hardinge expressed doubts as to the justification of retaining the administration in the hands of the British Government when their pecuniary claims had been satisfied and that there was no cause for anxiety as to the regular payment of the subsidy. The Court of Directors after a long delay of nearly a year now shifted their ground and in their despatch dated the 14th July 1847 stated that the real hindrance to the reinstatement of the Maharaja was not merely the non-liquidation of the debt but also the hazard which would be incurred to the prosperity and good government which the country then enjoyed by replacing it under a ruler whose competency to rule, according to them, was doubtful. It

could not be denied that peace and order had been established in the country and the object with which the administration had been assumed by the British Government having been fulfilled there existed no valid reason for retaining the country in the hands of the British Commission. The assumed incompetency of the Maharaja afforded therefore a convenient pretext for putting off the question, forgetful of the fact that at the time when the government of the country was transferred to the Maharaja's hands he was only an inexperienced youth of 16 years and that the Madras Government had strictly enjoined on the British Resident to cease interference in the internal affairs of the country.

In August 1848 the Maharaja again addressed the Governor-General for the restoration of his country. But at this time Lord Dalhousie was at the head of the Government of India and he had evidently contemplated the inauguration of a policy of wholesale annexation of large tracts of land administered by Indian rulers. No reply was sent to the Maharaja's reminder and Dalhousie pursued his policy of annexation which led to the disasters of the Great Mutiny in the time of his successor Lord Canning. There was considerable flutter in the minds of many of the native rulers when they saw before their eyes many historic houses such as Satara, Nagpore, Jhansi and numerous others being obliterated by this new policy of Lord Dalhousie. Krishnaraja Wodeyar equally shared with the other princes the uneasiness caused in their minds and in October 1855 finding that Lord Dalhousie had arrived at the Nilgiris to recruit his health sent an invitation to him to visit Mysore. Dalhousie complied with the Maharaja's request and there were many exchanges of compliments between them. Dalhousie's visit to Mysore did not however produce any change in his mind regarding the fate he had intended for Mysore. In a minute recorded by him on the 16th January 1856 reviewing Cubbon's administration report for the preceding official year occurs the following passage:—"The Raja of Mysore is now 62 years of age. He is the only Raja who for twenty generations past, as he himself informed me, has lived to the age of 60 years. It is probable therefore that his life will not be much further prolonged. He has no legitimate son or grandson, nor any lawful

male heir whatever. He has adopted no child and has never designed to adopt an heir..... The treaty under which Lord Wellesley raised the Raja while yet a child to the musnud and the treaty which was subsequently concluded with himself are both silent as to heirs and successors. No mention is made of them. The treaty is exclusively a personal one. The inexpediency of continuing this territory by an act of gratuitous liberality to any other native prince when the present Raja shall have died has been already conclusively shown by the conduct of His Highness himself whose rule though he commenced it under every advantage was so scandalously and hopelessly bad that power has long since been taken from him by the British Government. I trust therefore that when the decease of the present Raja shall come to pass with no son or grandson or legitimate male heir of any description the territory of Mysore which will then have lapsed to the British Government will be resumed and that the good work which has been so well begun will be completed."