

CHAPTER LXXIX.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

Bowring communicates Secretary of State's decision to the Maharaja—Maharaja re-urges claim—Secretary of State's approval of the reply of the Government of India—Protest by two members of the India Council.

Lord Elgin died in November 1863 and Sir William Denison, Governor of Madras, took his place as provisional Viceroy pending the arrival of Sir John Lawrence in January 1864. It therefore fell to the share of the provisional Governor-General to communicate the contents of the unfavourable despatch of Sir Charles Wood to the Maharaja, which he did in a khareetha dated 31st December 1863. This khareetha was forwarded to Bowring the Commissioner of Mysore for delivery to the Maharaja with all the forms usually observed on such occasions. At the same time the Commissioner was enjoined to be careful not to omit to do anything to soothe the painful feelings with which the Maharaja must receive the decision of Her Majesty's Government. Sir William Denison in his khareetha stated that Her Majesty's Government had expressed agreement with Canning's decision and that therefore the administration of Mysore would continue in the hands of the British Commission. Her Majesty's Government, further said Sir William Denison, were of opinion that assumption of the Mysore territory in 1831 was in accordance with the provisions of the Subsidiary Treaty of 1799, that the Maharaja could not as of right claim its restoration and that his reinstatement in the administration of the country was incompatible with the true interests of the people.

Bowring arrived at Mysore on the night of the 2nd February 1864 and met the Maharaja at 1 p.m. the next day in the palace. At this interview the only other persons present were Bakshi Narasappa who was the chief executive officer of the Maharaja and A. C. Hay, Secretary to the Commissioner. There was a little embarrassment felt on both sides to start the conversation. But this

was soon got over and Bowring communicated to the Maharaja the arrival of the khareetha and handed it over to His Highness. The Maharaja received it and remained for a while silent and then began to untie the strings of the bag which contained the khareetha. Finding His Highness somewhat slow in doing so, Bowring took it back from the Maharaja's hand and cut the strings with his sword and re-handed it to the Maharaja. The latter having opened the khareetha desired the Commissioner to explain it to him and the purport was made known in a few words. The Maharaja felt at first a little distracted. But he soon recovered his composure. He then placed the khareetha on his head and said that though he bowed to the decision, at the same time he could not help declaring that justice was totally denied to him by the Home Authorities. It is wonderful, he said, that the same British Government who to secure lasting fame and good faith did justice to his hereditary rights by placing him while a helpless boy of 5 years of age on his ancestral throne had not now scrupled to commit what practically was a breach of faith and thereby to expose themselves to reproach. "So long as justice sides my cause," said the Maharaja plaintively, "there is little fear of losing my rights. If one authority refuse me my claims, I shall never cease to importune another higher authority for better treatment..... Once more I assure you that it is my desire that this State which from time immemorial has been possessed by my House should be ever continued as a Native State and be uninterruptedly enjoyed by my posterity." After some references to the new Governor-General Sir John Lawrence, His Highness' desire to make an adoption and a few other matters, the interview ended.

Even in the darkest hour of his disappointment one trait of Krishnaraja Wodeyar's character was that he never yielded to despair and helplessness. On the departure of Bowring, according to Bakshi Narasappa's testimony, the Maharaja is stated to have remarked that it was not to be imagined that the decision then received was to be the final one terminating his endeavours to regain the government of his country, that he would never relinquish his claims and that his consciousness of their validity would

ever urge him to continue his efforts until he won over the British Government to do justice to him. True to this resolve, a few days later the Maharaja sent a letter to Bowring urging the appointment of a Resident as in former days, the recognition of his right to adopt a son and of the permanent continuance of Mysore as a Native State without being merged 'in the ocean of British territory' as he picturesquely expressed.

When Bowring's letter conveying the above wishes of the Maharaja reached Calcutta, Sir John Lawrence had assumed charge as Governor-General and he was disposed to treat the Maharaja with the utmost practicable liberality and consideration to terminate what he regarded as a profitless struggle on the part of His Highness. The first request, namely, the appointment of a Resident was negatived on the ground that such an arrangement would be productive of confusion and inconvenience. The form of administration as it stood at the time was well adapted to the best interests of the country and sufficiently consulted the dignity of the Maharaja by having its head entitled "Commissioner for the Government of the territories of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore." As regards the right of adoption, the Maharaja was informed that he was at full liberty to adopt a son to inherit his private property but that at the same time it was to be understood that no claim to the throne of Mysore arose thereby. The Maharaja however never wavered in the line of conduct he was pursuing and on being apprised of the above decision of the Government of India contented himself by sending a formal acknowledgment to that reply only observing that it was his firm intention not to relinquish any of his claims.

Sir Charles Wood gave his approval to the reply sent by Sir John Lawrence that any adoption made could only relate to His Highness' private property and would have no concern with the Government of the country. Two of the members of the India Council Sir Fredrick Currie and Sir John P. Willoughby again strongly protested against the ban put on the Maharaja to adopt a son to succeed to his State. The Chiefs of India, they said, would now believe that the promise of the Viceroy conceding the free right

of adoption was made in an hour of weakness and danger only to be disregarded when power revived after the danger had passed away.