

CHAPTER LXXXI.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

Adoption of Chamaraja Wodeyar—Intimation of the same to the Commissioner, the Governor-General and the Secretary of State—Their replies—Strong support to the adoption by three members of the India Council—Arguments against the adoption by other members.

At the time when Sir John Lawrence's khareetha dated 5th May 1865 was received, Krishnaraja Wodeyar was nearing his 71st birthday and had become devoid of all hope of a male progeny and his health had also become weak. The Maharaja however had noticed with satisfaction that there was a widespread desire on the part of the people both in and outside the State that after his life-time the country should retain its individuality as a Native State and not lapse to the British Government. The Maharaja's confidential friend and adviser Dr. Campbell had also kept him informed of the feeling that prevailed in His Highness' favour in England and pointed out the wisdom of his making an adoption. In such circumstances His Highness called into his secret counsel Bakshi Narasappa who was in the Palace service, B. Krishna Iyengar of Kolar and S. Venkatavarada Iyengar who were both in the State service and a few other well-wishers, and after discussing the subject with them became convinced of the propriety of Col. Campbell's advice to adopt a son. The Maharaja however was aware that several of the British officials in Mysore and the Viceroy Sir John Lawrence would not view the step with favour and he deemed it therefore advisable to conceal all preparations relating to the adoption till it became an accomplished fact.

On the 17th June 1865 invitations were sent to all the important men in the Mysore town to attend a preliminary ritualistic ceremony the next morning relating to the Maharaja's forthcoming 71st birthday celebration. Accordingly when all were assembled in the hall of the Palace known as Amba Vilas, the Maharaja rose from his seat and addressed the gathering to the effect that it was

known to all that he was childless and that therefore there was no successor to the throne—a throne which had been in the past occupied by such distinguished predecessors of his as Yaduraja, Raja Wodeyar and others of his family. He was therefore desirous of adopting a son and asked for their advice and consent. The assembled people then with one voice commended the desire of the Maharaja and left the choice of a child to him. The Maharaja then explained that it was his desire to adopt the third son of Chikka Krishne Urs, great-grandson of Katti Gopala Raj Urs of Bettadakote family. The child to be adopted was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years old and Chikka Krishne Urs, the child's natural father, had authorised his wife Devajammanni while he was alive to give the child in adoption, if such a contingency should arise. The child's family was one of the 13 families of the Arasu community of pure blood. On this statement being made, the people assembled evinced feelings of joy and thereupon the child was conducted from behind the purdah to the hall. The Maharaja then appealed for formal consent on the part of all assembled, including his own relations, and there being unanimity of consent everywhere proceeded to perform the religious ceremonies connected with the adoption and the child thus adopted was named Chamaraja Wodeyar.

At 11-30 a.m. a salute was fired announcing the completion of the adoption according to the Sastras. At the same time a note was sent by the Maharaja summoning Major Elliot, Superintendent of the Ashtagram Division in charge of Palace duties, to his presence on urgent business. On reaching the Palace, Major Elliot found the Maharaja sitting in the centre of the Amba Vilas hall surrounded by Vaidika Brahmins and a large assembly of other people. Parakalaswami who was the high priest of the Maharaja's family was also present. His Highness after Major Elliot was seated approached him with the child in the arms of one of his relations and mentioned to him that he had just then completed the ceremony of adoption as he had no son of his own to succeed him. The Maharaja also put into his hands to read letters and telegrams addressed to the Governor-General and others. His Highness also mentioned to Major Elliot that all his relations were present there

at the time and called out several times if any of them had any objection. But one and all returned the reply that they had none. Major Elliot noticed a number of representatives of all the important communities of people assembled in the hall.

The telegrams sent to the Commissioner, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State intimated that the Maharaja had that day adopted a son as successor to all the rights and privileges guaranteed to him by the treaty of 1799. The telegram to Sir John Lawrence, Governor-General, was followed up with a letter of the same date sent through the Commissioner. The letter said:—"I have the honour to announce to your Excellency that being far advanced in years and without issue male of my own body, I have this day the 10th Moon's decrease of Jaishta in the Krodana year of Saleevahana Era 1788, corresponding with the 18th June of 1865, according to Hindu Law, the usage of my ancestors and in virtue of Her Majesty's most gracious Proclamation adopted a son and successor to all my rights and privileges under the Partition Treaty of 1799 with the East India Company and His Highness the Nizam and under the Subsidiary Treaty of the same year with the East India Company both of which are in full force. In announcing to your Excellency the due performance of the ceremonies attendant on this important rite, I have to regret that from considerations connected with my age and personal convenience, which it is unnecessary for me to intrude on your Excellency's time and attention, I have been precluded from celebrating the occasion as I could have wished, or indeed to undertake more than the solemnity and publicity of the event indispensably required, but I need hardly assure your Excellency that nothing has been omitted in any respect essential to the validity of the adoption which has now been formally made and completed. The boy I have selected is a child of two and a half years old and of the purest Rajbindi or royal blood. He is the 3rd son of late Chikka Krishne Urs and grandson of Gopala Raj Urs the brother of Rani Lakshmi Ammanni (the Rani who signed the treaty between my family and the East India Company in 1799) who is the daughter of Katti Gopala Raj Urs of the Bettadakote house—one of the 13 families with which mine is

most nearly related. With regard to this selection I deem it advisable to acquaint your Excellency with certain circumstances that preceded the final ceremony of adoption. About 3 years ago while Chikka Krishne Urs was alive, I proceeded to his house and having formally seated him and his wife before me pointed out to them how from time immemorial our families had been closely united and signified my intention of adopting one of his children as the heir to my throne, the representative of the ancient Princes of Mysore and the inheritor of all the honours, rights and privileges guaranteed to me by treaties. Chikka Krishne Urs had then two sons born and a third child was shortly expected. The assent of the parents was readily given and in accordance with an arzee lately presented to me by Devajammanni the mother of the adopted child communicating the last wishes and injunctions of her husband regarding the adoption, I have chosen with the mother's consent the third son who was born 18 days after Chikka Krishne Urs' death and the ceremony of whose tonsure has not been performed. I have named him Chamarajendra Wodeyar Bahadur. It only remains for me to solicit the protection of the Governments of India and England to the heir whom I have thus adopted and I request that due and formal intimation of the event may be given to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India to whom I have this day telegraphed all particulars and that your Excellency will do me the favour to issue instructions to the Commissioner for the government of my territories for the observance of all honours and privileges due to the boy as my heir." Letters intimating that an adoption had been made by him were also sent by the Maharaja to various persons in England, chief of whom were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Manley, Lord Harris, General Fraser, Casamaijor, Col. Haines, Col. Macqueen and Dr. Devereux.

Bowring on receipt of the Maharaja's telegram and his letter immediately sent a reply stating that the adoption could not be recognised unless it received the assent and was in accordance with the orders of the Government of India. Sir John Lawrence's reply khareetha to the Maharaja was dated 12th July 1865 and in it he stated that formal intimation of His Highness' proceedings would be sent to the Secretary of State and that pending his instructions

it was not in his power to recognise the adoption nor could he allow to the boy the honours and privileges due to the heir to the State of Mysore.

In July 1865 Sir Charles Wood the Secretary of State sent a despatch to the Governor-General approving of his reply of 5th May of the same year to the Maharaja's khareetha of the previous January. Sir Charles Wood also confirmed intimation to the Maharaja already given by the Viceroy that the decision communicated as regards his restoration was final and irrevocable. With regard to the question of adoption, the Secretary of State repeated that he agreed with the Viceroy when the latter intimated to the Maharaja that no recognition would be given to any adoption made extending beyond the right to inherit the Maharaja's private property. No authority to adopt a successor to the Raj of Mysore had ever been given to the Maharaja and that none could be given then.

This decision of the Secretary of State evoked strong protests from three members of his Council—Sir George Clerk, Mr. Eastwick and Sir Fredrick Currie. But these were in a minority. Sir George Clerk used very strong language against the injustice that had been done to the Maharaja in denying him the right of adoption of a son to succeed to his throne. This new doctrine regarding adoption, he said, was so novel and unjust, so opposed to all custom and religions in India and so utterly inconsistent with the course of administration as previously exercised during the paramountcy of Hindus, Mahomedans and even the British that he could only conceive it to be the result of wild counsel prompting an indiscriminate gratification of a selfish policy which it was endeavoured to veil under a plea of expediency. It was not honest or dignified, he further said, to construe the acts of departed statesmen in a way which could not for a moment be really believed that those acts were intended by them to be at any time construed, or to hail the presence of 73,000 British troops as enabling them to do that which they did not conceive, or if conceived, they would never have attempted to do when they had only 23,000. Another member Captain Eastwick expressed his opinion that the word "heir" when

used in India meant either an "heir" of the body or an adopted heir and that both were equally rightful heirs. Eastwick further said that in the interests of public order and for the satisfaction of the State in which the adoption was made and as a guarantee against illegality it might be admitted that the formal assent of the Paramount Power was usually required and was considered important. But this assent was equally required in the succession of a natural heir, but that did not imply the right of dissent, the right of withholding recognition either in the one case or in the other, still less did it imply the right of deciding in one's own favour and of appropriating the territory. Upto a very recent date the sovereignty of the Maharaja had been uninterruptedly acknowledged by the representatives of the British Government and by the Home Authorities and it was only since the absorption of Mysore had been contemplated that the style of addressing the Maharaja had been changed and language more convenient for such a purpose had been adopted. While it was believed that the Maharaja intended to give his country to the British Government, it was also believed that he had entire liberty to bequeath it in full sovereignty. But when this illusion was dispelled, it came to be asserted that he had not the right to bequeath it to any one, even to a natural or adopted heir. The conditions of the treaty were appealed to when it was intended to divest the Maharaja of his dominions, while they were ignored when called upon to restore the country under the same conditions. Sir Fredrick Currie the third dissenting member recorded that no distinction was ever made by native rulers between an adopted and a natural heir. The recognition of the succession, he said, by the Paramount State was required equally in the one case as in the other. There was no instance of such a recognition being withheld except on account of the personal disqualification of the individual desiring to succeed when another individual was required to be substituted and there was no instance in the history of India of the Paramount Power, Mahomedan or Hindu, refusing its recognition of such succession as a pretext for appropriating the principality itself. Finally he stated that if it was a paramount necessity that Mysore or any portion of it should be incorporated in the British dominions it was

better to declare that fact, compensation being made to all parties who might have just claims under former treaty engagements.

The views of R. D. Mangles who voted with the majority in favour of the Secretary of State's despatch may also be quoted here as they go to explain the position taken by the Secretary of State and the majority of his Council. According to this member, the Maharaja of Mysore was as fully at liberty as the humblest of his fellow countrymen to adopt a son competent to perform his funeral rites and to succeed to all the personal property and private estates of his father by adoption. To perform the funeral ceremonies of a Hindu Prince it was by no means necessary that his son should be a sovereign Prince. If the adoption was recognised, the adopted son when he assumed the reins of Government would be confronted with a difficulty which did not exist in the time of his predecessors. Mysore had attracted a large number of European settlers, coffee planters and others and every day this number was increasing. If English magistrates found it no easy task to hold the balance even and to keep the peace between the planters and the ryots of Bengal, it might well be expected that Mysore would be thrown into a state little short of civil war and anarchy in the hands of native officials. It was false humility verging indeed upon childishness, akin to the theory of the superior happiness of the savage state, to question the superiority of an English Government acting upon fixed and known principles, unaffected in the main by any personal change of the chief rulers, administering a printed and widely promulgated code of laws and constantly aiming at least at improvement over native government entirely dependent upon the character of the prince, or if he was a nonentity of his minister, and which had as a general rule been going from bad to worse ever since the reign of Akbar. "It would be the highest presumption on my part to utter a word," further said Mangles, "in disparagement of the wisdom of those statesmen the Marquis of Wellesley and his brother the Duke of Wellington. But we stand upon the shoulders of our predecessors and have seen the utter and hopeless shipwreck of the schemes launched by them. It becomes us to profit by the experience gained during the intervening years and not to suffer ourselves to be misled by great names into a blind admiration of,

and adherence to, those parts of their policy which events have proved to be mistakes."

Prinsep another member of the Council who agreed with Mangles expressed wonder that the petition by the people of Mysore contained so few signatures. With an income and with such means as had been left at the Maharaja's disposal, 10,000 signatures might be expected to be at his command at any time in the city and environs of his immediate residence. As evidence, therefore, of the feeling and wishes of the population of Mysore, the petition was of no value whatsoever. Territories and populations could not like personal effects or real estates be handed over by a temporary occupant without reference to the terms on which he obtained them and the status in respect to them to which he himself was reduced. The considerations which regulated the appropriation and the proper government of these were quite different from those on which the transmission of effects and property depended being based on much broader principles.