

CHAPTER LXXXII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

Overtures to offer some concessions to the Maharaja— The Maharaja's rejection—Maharaja's unalloyed faith in Dr. Campbell.

The adoption of a son by the Maharaja introduced a factor which did not exist before. Even after the Secretary of State had decided against the Maharaja, it was felt by the British officers in India who were concerned with the affair that the Maharaja's claim for restoration was a just one in the abstract and that a small portion of the Mysore territory south of the Kaveri river yielding an annual revenue of about 10 lakhs of rupees might be granted to him on the understanding that he agreed to the compromise and renounced all further claims. The Maharaja repudiated a suggestion of this kind and refused to abate his claim in any degree. One of the British officers employed in Mysore advised the Maharaja that as the Commissioner was well disposed towards him he might leave the entire question in his hands and accept the terms offered by him, as otherwise the opportunity might be lost for ever. Major Martin a coffee planter settled at Mercara was at this time in the absence of Col. Campbell in England the confidential European adviser of the Maharaja. Through this gentleman various European friends interested in the Maharaja's affairs conveyed similar suggestions. It was also suggested that through Col. Campbell's bad management in England the case had failed. The Maharaja however is stated to have firmly said that he would never give up his tried friend Col. Campbell whose unalloyed zeal in his cause was to him beyond all doubt. It was then urged on the Maharaja that two Secretaries of State had given adverse decisions in his case, that the people of England possessed little knowledge of Indian affairs and that therefore any opening for further negotiations should be welcomed and that it was desirable that His Highness should have a personal talk with Bowring on the subject. The Maharaja

feeling somewhat persuaded of the wisdom of this advice desired Mr. Bowring to pay him a visit.

Bowring accordingly arrived in Mysore on the 14th September 1865 and visited the Maharaja the next day. The Maharaja at this interview is stated to have proposed that his hopes of obtaining a favourable decision in England having ended the Commissioner should use his good offices to obtain for him an extent of territory yielding 40 lakhs of rupees a year. Bowring in reply is mentioned as having stated that the observations contained in the last khareetha to him by the Viceroy were final and that he could not support a proposition of the kind put forward by His Highness. No reference was made at this interview to the adopted child nor was the child produced before Bowring. Bowring again visited the Maharaja the next day and His Highness made no reference to the business of the previous day but talked to him on various other subjects. The adopted child who was loaded with precious jewellery and in kinkhab dresses was however brought in and introduced to Bowring. At this interview, on the conversation turning to the part played by Dr. Campbell in England the Maharaja is said to have contented himself by merely remarking that 'a good hook sometimes stumbles.'

In the meanwhile, a khareetha from Sir John Lawrence dated 21st August 1865 containing the last decision of the Secretary of State had reached the Maharaja. In this khareetha the Viceroy repeated that consideration for the well-being of the State and the people of Mysore rendered it impossible for Her Majesty's Government to acquiesce in the restoration asked for, that no authority to adopt a successor to the Raj of Mysore had ever been given and that no such power could then be conceded. It was but right, the khareetha concluded, that His Highness should in the future abstain from all further remonstrance against a decision which had received from the highest authority an absolute and decisive sanction.

The inhabitants of the State before the Secretary of State's despatch arrived having vaguely heard of its adverse character got

up petitions addressed to the Government of India expressing their joy at the adoption made by the Maharaja and urging that Government to accept the adopted son as successor to the throne of Mysore. In Madras and other outside places public meetings were held and deputations arrived at Mysore to convey congratulations to the Maharaja on the step he had taken.

It was at this time believed in England that a new ministry would come to power and the hope was thereby revived that possibly the new ministry would maintain a more favourable attitude towards the Mysore question. The attention of the press had already been attracted to the subject even before the adoption took place. The Examiner in its issue of 1st April 1865 had in strong language expressed condemnation of the desired annexation of Mysore. "We are utterly dismayed," wrote this paper, "at finding Lord Canning at the very moment of writing high sentiments actually contemplating the overthrow of the kingdom of Mysore and the repudiation of a solemn treaty then but three score years old and to the enactments of which there were still living witnesses. Wonderful is it to see an English gentleman of high integrity, blameless life and eminent ability when transmuted into an Indian politician fancying figments and adducing reasons which would damage the reputation of a village attorney..... We have even got something more substantial, an annual tribute of a quarter of a million a year, so punctually paid that up to the present time it has amounted to the handsome total of £ 16½ million. For very shame let us hear no more of Mysore annexation." Another paper 'Allen's Indian Mail' wrote in its issue of the 22nd April of the same year: "If the treaty did not contemplate the reinstatement of the Raja if once superseded nor the Adoption Despatch confer upon him the right to name an heir, how came it that Lord Canning was so anxious that His Highness should bequeath his kingdom to the British Government? If he had the power to will away his territories, surely he had power to adopt an heir..... The only valid objection to the reinstatement of the Raja is the fertility of his kingdom and its general desirableness as a British possession." At about this time a powerful political writer Major Evans Bell published a book under the caption of 'The Mysore Reversion' in

the preface to which he wrote—"By the publication of this book I hope to produce a conviction so decided of the injustice, impolicy and imprudence of the meditated annexation as may lead to some decided action in the Cabinet or in Parliament and may once more place the Home Authorities in distinct antagonism to that policy of bad faith and disguised rapacity by which during the last twenty years the officials of Calcutta have destroyed the fair fame of Great Britain in the East and undermined the foundations of our Indian Empire."

Krishnaraja Wodeyar had been fully keeping himself informed of all that was going on both in England as well as in India. When the last khareetha of Sir John Lawrence communicating to him the rejection of his claim by the Secretary of State reached his hands, the Maharaja felt by no means disheartened and in spite of the advice from some of his European friends to come to a compromise with Bowring, His Highness resolved to carry the struggle to England for decision in the British Parliament. Accordingly, he wrote to Dr. Campbell on the 22nd December in these words:—

"You must believe that I depend upon nobody but yourself and yourself alone and that I would not in my life lean on Mr. Bowring or anyone for the world. I and my Bakshi Narasappa would rather hang ourselves than pursuing such a mean and unbecoming course. I fully appreciate your indefatigable exertions and the most zealous and vigorous advocacy in my cause. How can I sufficiently thank you for all the immense trouble you have taken every hour in my affair? I cannot here enumerate the critical position under which I am now placed and the utter embarrassment with which I am now struggling..... I flatly refused the acceptance of Mr. Bowring's offer though the suggestions and counsels of several of our European as well as Indian friends to take the gift of Mr. Bowring were unanimous. Then curses were heaped upon my Bakshi Narasappa by all those who advised us to take the offer. The headman here and his clique tried their utmost to remove Narasappa from his place and to leave me alone without help. But Narasappa boldly trampled at the devices of those set of devils..... I have asked Major Renton to go to England to explain to you the whole transactions as lucidly as possible

Majors Pearse and Renton were most faithful to me and gave me satisfaction."

Besides the numerous Indians who supported the Maharaja's claims from outside Mysore, there were in the State itself several sympathisers among the official classes. The officials of the Hebbar Sri Vaishnava community were most prominent and went to the length of giving their support to the Maharaja even at the risk of injury to themselves.