

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

The struggle in England—Change of Ministry in England—Lord Cranborne Secretary of State in succession to Sir Charles Wood—Interview with Lord Cranborne by a deputation led by Sir Henry Rawlinson—Support of the Press in England in favour of preserving the integrity of the State of Mysore—John Morley's clear exposition of the Mysore Case.

At the period at which we have arrived, there was considerable agitation in England for Parliamentary reform. Lord Palmerston the Prime Minister was lukewarm in this matter. Lord John Russel who succeeded him on his death was of a different mind. W. E. Gladstone introduced a Reform Bill in the House of Commons in March 1866. But the Conservatives and moderate Liberals combined against the Bill and formed, what John Bright called, the cave of Adulum into which was invited every one who was in distress and everyone who was discontented. The Cave increased in strength and Gladstone saw there was little hope of the Bill being passed. This roused him to the utmost and in winding up the debate on the second reading on April 28th Gladstone made one of those great speeches which marked epochs in the history of the British Parliament. Forseeing the fate of his Bill, he concluded his impassioned speech with words which have become memorable for all age:—"Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may drop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again floats in the eye of Heaven and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain, and to a not far distant, victory." The Government was defeated shortly after and resigned. Lord Derby

the leader of the Conservatives now formed a new ministry. Lord Cranborne (later Marquis of Salisbury) took the place of Sir Charles Wood as Secretary of State for India.

Lord Cranborne in his election speech at Stamford had made an elaborate protest against the policy of annexation in India. After he became Secretary of State, in his speech introducing the Indian Budget in the House of Commons he expressed himself as a vigorous supporter of the policy of not laying hands on the territories of Indian Princes. The Press in England had also awakened to the great injustice done to Mysore by Sir John Lawrence and Sir Charles Wood by the rejection of the Maharaja's claim for reinstatement as the actual ruler of his country. Lawrence was condemned as a disciple of Dalhousie whose policy of absorption of Indian States into British territory had produced the Indian Mutiny. "If once Mysore became British territory," asserted these organs of public opinion, "nothing would persuade the Princes, Chiefs and people of India that the assurances given to them in the Queen's Proclamation were not all moonshine, the Adoption Despatch so much waste paper, and British honour a thing to be talked about in time of difficulty but having no existence when the difficulty was overcome." These papers also deplored the apathy which existed in the British public mind regarding the true state of things in India inasmuch as a broken head, in Whitechapel they said, created a greater sensation among Englishmen than a revolution in Hindusthan. A fertile and pleasant province like Mysore, it was written, providing a cool summer retreat for Government officials and snug berths for sons and nephews might seem a rich prize to Indian officials. But it was marvellous that any English statesman taking from a distance a comprehensive survey of the vast empire of India and mindful of the giant career that for good or evil lay before it should have failed to see that twenty such provinces as Mysore would be dearly purchased if their possession crippled the influence which was a high mission of England to exercise upon the future of India by shaking the confidence of the Indian people in British moderation and good faith.

The Maharaja who was closely watching the trend of public opinion in England now took heart once more to re-assert his claims. In July 1866 after remaining silent for more than a year, he addressed a fresh khareetha to Sir John Lawrence to dispel, as he said, certain misapprehensions which appeared in the Viceroy's letter of 5th May 1865 addressed to him. The Maharaja concluded this khareetha by asserting that a due regard for the honour of his ancestors, for the rights of his adopted son and his family, and for the best interests of his people compelled him to maintain the real strength of his title, to vindicate his right to adopt a successor, and to claim from the protecting power his personal restoration as the best proof that could be given that the preservation of the Raj was still intended and not its speedy destruction. A few sentences in this khareetha are so noteworthy that they may be quoted here:—"Notwithstanding the officially recorded changes in my views of the reformed system, notwithstanding General Sir Mark Cubbon's officially recorded acknowledgment in his letter of the 2nd June 1860 of the cordiality observed by me for a good many years towards the existing administration, no credit is given me for the wisdom that comes with age, with reflection, and with observation of passing events. And yet I must in justice to myself claim to have observed much and to have learned much in my long retirement. Among other lessons, I have learned that the possession of absolute power is a dangerous and undesirable possession for any man; and I have observed that although my unskilful use of absolute power in early life has been severely blamed, the British Government is careful to entrust no such prerogative to any of its functionaries from the highest to the lowest. Every officer, civil and military, every magistrate including even the monarch, is ruled and guided by Law. To this great method of established law and order in financial, judicial and administrative affairs I should wish my Government to conform and I am ready and willing to bind myself and my successors to rule in obedience to such regulations and ordinances as in the first instance and from time to time may be approved by the protecting power." On receipt of this khareetha Sir John Lawrence sent a reply stating that the same would be forwarded to England for the perusal of the Secretary of State for

India and expressed regret that the Maharaja had not acquiesced in the decision of Her Majesty's Government in conformity with the counsel given in his last khareetha.

To the credit of many public men in England it may be stated that they fully realised the justice of the Maharaja's claim and took active measures to urge it before the authorities concerned. On 23rd July 1866 a deputation consisting of Members of Parliament and other gentlemen who had long taken active part in Indian affairs waited on Lord Cranborne the Secretary of State for the purpose of making a collective remonstrance against the threatened annexation of Mysore. Sir Henry Rawlinson who led the deputation after fully explaining the merits of the case concluded by saying that although the opinions of Sir John Lawrence and his three predecessors were against the restoration of Mysore, yet the opinion of Sir John Denison an equally competent authority was in favour of it. It had become manifest that Lord Canning had acted under the mistaken idea that Krishnaraja Wodeyar wished to bequeath his territories to the British Government, while Lord Elgin was inclined to effect a compromise. Sir John Lawrence himself whatever change his views might have undergone had while in the India office voted in favour of the restoration of the Maharaja. Even if all these uncertain advocates of annexation were counted as full advocates of annexation, the balance of authority was strongly in favour of maintaining the principality. The Governor-General Lord William Bentinck who first assumed the management of Mysore was subsequently in favour of the Maharaja's restoration and had regretted for his act of supersession. Sir Charles Metcalfe, Sir William McNaughton, Lord Gremlay and several of the Members of the India Council who had been employed in political offices in India had expressed opinions favourable to the Maharaja's rights. The late Casamaijor who had been Resident at Mysore in 1831 and General Briggs who was present with the deputation and who was the first British Commissioner for Mysore were both of opinion that the Maharaja had been unjustly treated. Rawlinson further emphasised that in addition to Sir John Willoughby, Sir Fredrick Currie, Sir Henry Montgomery, Sir George Clerk and Captain

Eastwick,—all members of the India Council who had written so strongly in favour of the subject might be mentioned the names of Sir John Low member of the Supreme Council, General Fraser, General Sir Grand Jacob, W. H. Bayley, Colonel Haines and of many other distinguished Indian officers and of authors and public men who had all signed a petition to the House of Commons praying for the maintenance of the State of Mysore. Some of the other members of the deputation also spoke on the subject. Sir Edward Colebrooke pointed out that until the annexation of Satara by Dalhousie there never had been an instance of a Native State being claimed as a lapse by any Hindu or Mahomedan Suzerain or by the British Government. Such a claim was especially preposterous in the case of a State with which there was a treaty. Lord William Hay read an interesting letter written by Sir Mark Cubbon deprecating any step that might tend to the extinction of the Mysore State in contempt of the Proclamation of Queen Victoria. General Briggs stated that from his own observation and knowledge the original reports as to the mismanagement and oppression under the Maharaja's Government were grossly exaggerated and that this had been admitted to a great extent in the report of the Commissioners of enquiry of 1834. Major Evans Bell another member of the deputation said that his conviction was that it was only by maintaining the Native States that the supremacy of Great Britain and the peace and prosperity of India could be secured. Sir James Fergusson who was at the time Under Secretary of State for India enquired if it was not the case that good government must depend upon the personal character of the Prince, to which Major Bell replied that if the Government of a Native State was allowed to depend on the personal character of a Prince the fault was entirely on the part of the British Government which refused to put forth its unlimited influence to enforce reforms but permitted and sometimes even insisted on Rajas and Nawabs remaining absolute despots. Lord Cranborne before taking leave of the deputation asked Sir Henry Rawlinson to explain what exactly the deputation wanted the Government to do and especially whether it was expected that the Maharaja should be replaced in the same position he held before 1831. Sir Henry Rawlinson replied

that all they thought themselves justified in asking was that the Government should maintain the integrity of the State.

Meanwhile, the Press in England took up the Mysore cause and in well-reasoned articles brought home to the minds of the British people the injustice that would be caused to the Maharaja and to the people of his State by its annexation. It now became somewhat evident that in spite of all diplomatic or interested reasonings on the part of officials, the public in England were not likely to listen to the same and even the most influential Indian statesmen would have no power to bias the case, supported as it was by so many able men as were on the Indian Deputation as well as outside. In the previous year the Mysore case had appeared very hopeless. But in 1866 the prospect became cheerful. John Morley the great journalist and author who subsequently entered Parliament and held many Cabinet appointments including that of the Secretary of State for India published a well-reasoned and powerful article on the Mysore subject in the Fortnightly Review in September 1866. "It is no cynical exaggeration," said Viscount Morley as he became known in the concluding years of his life, "that the amount of active political sympathy in England with the affairs of her colonies and of the great Indian Empire is, comparatively speaking, very small. General considerations however are commonly neglected especially in this country, unless they are bound up with one or more particular cases. Happily for my purpose, though unhappily on other and larger grounds, a very remarkable and important episode in the history of English rule in India is occurring at the present moment which illustrates to too great perfection both the absence as a matter of fact of English supervision and the evil consequences which result as a consciousness of this on the part of the various branches of the Indian Government. The story of Mysore has this additional advantage that it is not yet completed. The matter is still being transacted under our eyes. The fifth act of a drama of which all India supplies the keenly interested spectators has yet to be added and the nature of the concluding scenes it is still within the power of the English public and the English minister to determine. When it is remembered that in the opinion of many persons best qualified

to give an opinion, this determination will mark the turning point of the career of England in India, the importance of the decision being in the right direction cannot easily be over-rated."

According to Morley, by the Partition and Subsidiary Treaties of 1799 (a) a separate State of Mysore had been set up; (b) the sovereignty had been conferred upon the representative of the old line of Rajas; (c) the new ruler agreed to do certain things; and (d) the Governor-General reserved the right of remedying any neglect to do these things. Although Lord Wellesley quite consistently reserved the right to administer part or parts of the Mysore territory in case of non-payment of the promised funds, he had previously in the Partition treaty guaranteed the separate existence of the Mysore State along with the other conditions of that treaty "as long as the sun and the moon endured." Such a phrase was, it was said, a careless oriental phrase. But such a pretence, wrote Morley, was dissipated by the fact that it was not an oriental but Lord Wellesley himself who had dictated the clause.

Two questions had to be answered, further emphasised Morley, before finally resolving on the extinction of the Mysore State—(a) Had the English Government any legal right to annex the Mysore territory? (b) Granting that the legal right could be satisfactorily established, did a general view of the British position towards the Indian Princes countenance the expediency of so availing of it? Readers of Sir Charles Wood's despatches found that far greater stress was laid in them on the considerations of what the British might find themselves empowered to do than upon those considerations of what it was to their advantage to do. Upto 1847 nobody hinted that the treaty could be interpreted other than in one way and that one way was the restoration of the country to the Maharaja after order and peace had been established. It was, therefore, a mere sophism on the part of Sir Charles Wood to have stated that the treaty contained no condition under which the administration of the Maharaja's territories if once assumed by the British Government should be restored to His Highness. What would be thought of a landlord, argued Morley, who after dis-

training for rent and satisfying his demand should decline to quit the premises on the ground that there was no clause in the agreement stating the condition on which he should quit them? Sir Henry Montgomery in recording his dissent from the Secretary of State's despatch had justly remarked that if the treaty was to be quoted in such rigid interpretation when adverse to the Maharaja's claims, it was fair also to quote with the same strictness as not authorising the assumption of the entire country under any view of its real condition at that period. If it was only a personal treaty as said by Lord Dalhousie in later years, what could Lord Wellesley's object have been in going through the farce of a treaty with a child only five years old? What reason was there for setting up the child at all, if he were only to play warming-pan for the East India Company? The Company needed no fiction of this sort. Their troops were victorious. The country was theirs and it was the deliberate choice of the Governor-General to erect it into a State as long as the sun and the moon should endure. Lord Wellesley was of all the Governors-General that India ever had till then the least likely to play a trick or to go through an unintelligible performance of that kind.

Although as a matter of fact Mysore had not been included in the assurance that the policy of annexation had been abandoned, yet that State, in Morley's opinion, would afford the first test-case as to the sincerity of the professions of the British Government. No amount of reasoning or explanation would convince the Indian Princes that if the non-annexation policy was not adhered to in the case of Mysore, the same would be followed in any other case where annexation suited their purpose. If the immediate restoration of the administration of Mysore to the Maharaja was beset with danger to the prosperity of its people, there was an alternative open. The son adopted by the Raja was a child and his right to succeed to the throne on the Raja's death might be recognised, and instead of leaving the child to grow anyhow he might be surrounded with the best European and Native influences that were within reach. The Mysore Commissioner whose communications to the Foreign Office at Calcutta, said Morley, were sometimes more like those of a gossiping maid-of-honour than those of a grave and responsible

official assured the Government that the signatures to the petition in the name of the people of Mysore were chiefly those of the Raja's tradesmen. Even admitting that there was truth in this assertion, yet *a priori* considerations indicated the probability of an oriental population desiring the restoration of the representative of a long line of rulers and preferring to be governed by their own countrymen.

The Hon'ble Rao Sahib Viswanath Narayan Mandlik who was a distinguished lawyer of Bombay in a pamphlet entitled "Adoption versus Annexation" which he wrote about this time protested strongly against the doctrine of lapse of Indian States and learning that the Mysore Case was to be discussed in Parliament appealed to the members to set their face against annexation and recognise the right of the Maharaja of Mysore to take a son in adoption as successor to all his rights. "A glorious opportunity now awaits the British Parliament," said Mandlik, "to show practically that it will right the wronged. I allude to the case of the Maharaja of Mysore, which I see is to be brought before the British nation. The Maharaja's cause or, in other words, that of British faith is warmly and judiciously advocated by five members of the India Council. But natives of India are grieved to see a person like Mr. Mangles employing arguments as puerile as they are unjust. Whoever heard of a treaty such as that of Mysore being called a deed of gift? Still more strange is it to read that the words "shall be binding upon the contracting parties as long as the sun and the moon shall endure" do not imply perpetuity to Indian minds. The Indian mind is shocked at such sophistry in high quarters..... The good of the people which the annexationists talk of to excuse their injustice to the Princes of India is a mere stock pretence."