

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III—1831—1868.

Recognition of the adopted son by the Government in England—Debate in Parliament—Durbar in the Mysore Palace.

A short time after Rawlinson's deputation waited on the Secretary of State for India, a petition signed among others by several old Indian officers was presented to the House of Commons by John Stuart Mill the famous political and philosophical writer praying that the House might take such steps as seemed in their wisdom efficacious to secure the re-establishment of the Hindu Government in Mysore consistently with British interests and the prosperity of the people of the State. A question of the greatest importance to the future fortunes of the Mysore State and of its royal family was put in the House of Commons on the 22nd February 1867. On that day Sir Henry Rawlinson asked Lord Cranborne, Secretary of State for India, whether the Government in England had come to any decision on the appeal of the Maharaja of Mysore regarding the succession of his adopted son to the throne of Mysore. Rawlinson in explanation of his question stated that when the Mysore territories were conquered in 1799, it was in the power of the Governor-General at the time to have divided the whole of the territories between the British Government and its allies, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Peshwa of Poona. But he thought it expedient on political grounds to re-establish the kingdom of Mysore, though with a diminished area, and to put Krishnaraja Wodeyar the representative of the old Hindu royal family in possession of it. Next, the speaker continued, when the administration was taken out of the hands of this Prince in 1831, Lord William Bentinck on subsequent examination was not satisfied with the grounds on which that extreme step had been taken by him. Rawlinson further said that he was of opinion that the benefits conferred on the country by the British administration had fully compensated for the irregularity of that interference. He was also not prepared to advocate the restoration of the

administration to the old Raja's hands as he had parted with it thirty-five years ago and had become unused to the toils of government but he would only say that the Raja had a valid ground of complaint regarding the right of his adopted son to inherit his kingdom. When Krishnaraja Wodeyar first expressed a wish to adopt a son and signified the fact to the Governor-General, a difference of opinion prevailed in the Council of India and a vague answer was returned leaving the question open. Subsequently the adoption having actually taken place and on a second reference being made to the Secretary of State the right of the adopted son to inherit the kingdom was not recognised, the effect of such an action on the part of the British Government inevitably leading to the extinction of Mysore as a separate State on the death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar and to its absorption in the British dominions. On various grounds however, both of expediency as well as of right, it was necessary, concluded Rawlinson, that the integrity of the State should be maintained. Sir Edward Colebrooke who supported Sir Henry Rawlinson said that although Lord Canning had not sent the Adoption Circular to the Raja of Mysore, yet he did not regard that the Mysore territory would after the death of the Raja automatically lapse to the British Government. For within thirty days after laying down the principle that only those Princes who directly governed their territories as sovereign princes were to have the right of succession, Canning recorded his opinion regarding Mysore that the Raja might be eventually induced to bequeath his country to the British Government. The speaker therefore maintained that it followed that the succession ought to be recognised when it was admitted that the Raja possessed the power of bequest. Lord Cranborne in his reply announced that strictly interpreting the treaties of 1799, although he could not admit that the son of the Maharaja of Mysore whether natural or adopted had any right to succeed to the sovereignty of Mysore, yet on political grounds it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to annex the territory on the death of the Raja and it was his hope that the adopted son would show himself capable of governing the country on his reaching the age of majority.

On the 16th April of the same year Sir Stafford Northcote who had succeeded Lord Cranborne on the latter's resignation on account of differences in the Cabinet relating to the Parliamentary Reform Bill of Lord Derby's Government sent a despatch to the Governor-General in India formally communicating the decision of the British Government to restore Mysore to native rule. The despatch was in these terms :—" I have received and considered in Council the letter of Your Excellency's Government in the Foreign Department dated 31st October 1866 enclosing a khareetha from His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

" In considering the questions raised in that communication, it is unnecessary for me to advert in detail to the observations of His Highness upon the transactions referred to in the earlier part of his reign before the assumption of the Government of Mysore by Lord William Bentinck. The request of the Maharaja that he should himself be reinstated in the Government of the Mysore territory was fully considered in Council and the final decision of Her Majesty's Government was communicated to you in Sir Charles Wood's despatch of 17th July 1865. I cannot hold out any hope that it will be reversed.

" The decision, however, of Her Majesty's Government with respect to the disposal of the territory of Mysore after the death of the present Maharaja has not yet been communicated to you. In the khareetha transmitted by Your Excellency this question is formally raised and it now becomes my duty to convey to you the instructions of Her Majesty's Government upon this important question.

" Without entering upon any minute examination of the terms of the treaties of 1799, Her Majesty's Government recognise in the policy which dictated that settlement a desire to provide for the maintenance of an Indian dynasty on the throne of Mysore upon terms which should at once afford a guarantee for the good government of the people and for the security of British rights and interests. Her Majesty is animated by the same desire and shares the views to which I have referred. It is Her earnest wish that

those portions of India which are not at present under Her immediate dominion may continue to flourish under native Indian Rulers co-operating with Her representatives in the promotion of the general prosperity of the country; and in the present case more especially, having regard to the antiquity of the Maharaja's family, its long connection with Mysore and the personal loyalty and attachment to the British Government which His Highness has so conspicuously manifested, Her Majesty desires to maintain that family on the throne in the person of His Highness' adopted son upon terms corresponding with those made in 1799 so far as the altered circumstances of the present time will allow.

“In considering the stipulations which will be necessary to give effect to this arrangement, I have, in the first place, to observe that Her Majesty's Government cannot but feel a peculiar interest in the welfare of those who have now for so long a period been subject to their direct administration and that they will feel it their duty before replacing them under the rule of a native sovereign to take all the pains they can with the education of that sovereign and also to enter into a distinct agreement with him as to the principles upon which he shall administer the country and to take sufficient securities for the agreement.

“It is therefore the intention of Her Majesty that the young Prince should have the advantage of an education suitable to his rank and position and calculated to prepare him for the duties of administration; and I have to desire you to propose to the Maharaja that he should receive this education, under the superintendence of your Government. I have to request that you will communicate with me as to the mode in which this can best be effected without separating the young Prince more than is necessary from those over whom he may hereafter be called on to rule. If at the demise of His Highness the young Prince should not have attained the age which you upon consideration may fix for his majority, the territory shall continue to be governed in his name upon the same principles and under the same regulations as at the present time. Upon his reaching that age or at an earlier period if you should think it desirable, it will be the duty of the British Government before

confiding to him the administration of the whole or any portion of the State to enter into an arrangement with him for the purpose of adequately providing for the maintenance of a system of Government well adapted to the wants and interests of the people.

“As regards the rights and interests of the British Government, it is sufficient to point out that as the cost of supporting troops has largely increased since 1799, it will obviously be necessary that the terms of that treaty should be revised and some addition made to the subsidy. The great increase which has taken place in the resources of Mysore since 1799 and more especially since the assumption of the government by Lord William Bentinck will prevent such addition being felt as an undue burden. The precise terms of the revision may be left to be settled when the young Prince is put in possession of the administration.”

The despatch having subsequently been placed on the table of the House of Commons for the information of the members, Lord William Hay one of the members raised a debate on this despatch on the 24th May 1867 on the ground that the despatch went beyond the assurances given by Lord Cranborne ex-Secretary of State for India in his speech in the House of Commons on the 22nd February preceding. Lord Hay said that Lord Cranborne had expressed that the treaty of 1799 so far as it related to Krishnaraja Wodeyar was a personal and not a dynastic treaty but that the Northcote despatch differed from the speech in several respects, especially with regard to the personal or dynastic character of the treaty. The despatch began by professing that the view of the present Government of Her Majesty was not in conflict with that of the late Government, but at the same time had left the personal character of the treaty an open one. The speaker however ultimately did not oppose the continuance of Mysore as a Native State.

Sir Stafford Northcote in his reply stated that at the time he took charge of the duties of the Secretary of State for India he found that the position as left by his predecessor was that the State of Mysore was not to be annexed on the death of the old

Raja, that the treaty was to be regarded as a personal one and it rested with the British Government consistently with the policy of non-annexation to make any convenient arrangement for the subsequent administration of the country as the circumstances of the time demanded, that the Raja's adopted son was to be taken under the care of the British Government and was to be given such education as his rank and intended destiny in life required and that when the young Prince reached the age of 18 or 20 the British Government was definitely to decide the future course. But this position had been reached by Lord Cranborne, further said Sir Stafford Northcote, without his consulting the Council of India and on the new Secretary of State consulting the India Council upon the subject found that the majority of the members of that Council were not in agreement with the views of Lord Cranborne and that they were in favour of a policy of annexation. Northcote acknowledged that on his own examination of the question he felt that he could not quite agree with his predecessor's statement as to the treaty being entirely of a personal character. He regarded the question as one not to be decided merely by a technical construction of the clauses of the treaty of 1799 but as one to be decided on lines of broad national policy and in the spirit in which Lord Wellesley viewed the original arrangement. Further, Lord Canning's very expression of a hope that the Raja would make a bequest of his country to the British confirmed him in his belief that the original treaty was not so definitely of a personal character. Lord Cranborne who was present in the House of Commons at the time this debate took place gave his support to the observations made by his successor not only on the especial ground, as he said, of his successor's policy being coincident with that which he had suggested but also on broad constitutional grounds. In his opinion, said Lord Cranborne, the despatch under discussion substantially expressed not only the decision of Her Majesty's Government as had been come to before his resignation but also that of the House of Commons upon the question raised, though it was against the opinion of the majority of the members of India Council.

On a perusal of the Subsidiary Treaty of 1799 it will be seen by our readers that Sir Stafford Northcote interpreted the intentions

of the original framers of this treaty much more correctly than did the members of the India Council. The treaty was called a treaty of "perpetual friendship and alliance" and at the end of the preamble it was stated that it was to be binding on the contracting parties as long as the sun and the moon endured. In the preamble of the Partition Treaty also its binding nature is indicated by the words "as long as the sun and the moon shall endure." In the course of the debate on the 24th May 1867 however, some of the speakers attempted to make capital out of the words 'for ever' found in Articles 1 and 2 of the Partition Treaty relating to the allotment of shares of Tippu's territories to the British Government and to the Nizam and the omission of the same words in clause 4 of the same treaty relating to the establishment of a separate kingdom of Mysore with Krishnaraja Wodeyar as its sovereign under certain conditions. It may be fairly inferred that the insertion of the words 'for ever' when speaking of the British Government and the Nizam was considered necessary as the grants were unconditional, while on the other hand the omission of the same words in the clause relating to the formation of a separate kingdom of Mysore, if intentional, was meant to provide for the temporary sequestration of the country when the Governor-General considered that the punctual payment of the subsidy was in danger. The Subsidiary Treaty was, it may fairly be said, intended to endure 'as long as the sun and the moon endured' as much as the Partition Treaty was so intended. For, otherwise the perpetual character of the treaty of friendship and alliance referred to at the commencement of the Subsidiary Treaty would be meaningless. The Court of Directors when they refused sanction to Bentinck's proposal to appropriate a portion of the Mysore territory permanently in lieu of the periodical payment of sums of money clearly had no idea that they looked upon the grant as a mere life-grant. It is not too much therefore to say that the subsequent interpretation of the Subsidiary Treaty in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Maharaja was clearly an after-thought to find support for the desire for annexation.

On Krishnaraja Wodeyar becoming aware of the decision contained in Sir Stafford Northcote's despatch he was only partially

pleased with its contents inasmuch as it gave no support to his personal restoration. The Maharaja also regarded with some apprehension the indeterminate character of the despatch as regards the extent of the territory to be allotted to his adopted son on his reaching majority as well as the extent of power to be conferred on him, especially considering the length of time that should elapse before he attained majority and the allowance to be made for the uncertainty of events in the interval. His Highness, however, took consolation in the thought that the former decision of complete extinction of his State had been reversed and to that extent the despatch was satisfactory. On the 18th July 1867 C. B. Saunders, the acting Commissioner, was present at a durbar held at Mysore on the occasion of the Maharaja's 74th birthday. The young Prince was conducted to this durbar and was received with all the usual marks of respect due to his rank. Saunders as the representative of the British Government welcomed the Prince as His Highness' rightful heir and wished that he would study so to prepare himself for the duties of administration as to become a worthy and successful ruler. The Maharaja in return expressed gratitude to the British Government for the favour shown to him and to his family and wished that the Commissioner should convey his feeling of joy and gratefulness to all the authorities concerned.

Bowring who had gone on leave to England in September 1866 returned to Bangalore in November 1867 and on the 20th of the same month had an interview with the Maharaja at his capital. His Highness was pretty well and cheerful at the time and as keen as ever about his personal restoration.