

reigned from 1758 to 1798 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Evidently therefore this treaty cannot be taken as proof of an agreement having been entered into between Maharaja Rama Varma (1721-1729) and the Nawab of the Carnatic in 1726. The truth is that in 1726 Maharaja Rama Varma took the unprecedented step of raising a mercenary army from outside the state with the help of the Nayaks of Madura in order to crush the opposition to his rule from hostile elements in the kingdom and in doing so he undertook to pay a tribute to the Nayaks of Madura<sup>2</sup>.

### MODERN HISTORY

#### Marthanda Varma 904-933 Kollam Era (1729-1758 A.D.)

Marthanda Varma who is generally regarded as the Maker of Modern Travancore, ascended the throne in 1729 at the early age of 23. His is an epoch-making reign in the history of Travancore. The political condition of the kingdom at the time of his accession to the throne was almost chaotic. There were no organised departments for transaction of state business, while the finances of the kingdom were in an extremely unsatisfactory condition. The local feudatories, the *Pillamar* and the *Madampimar*, were more or less independent chieftains with the result that the authority of the king was nowhere respected. The *Yogakkar* continued to be in alliance with the Pillamar against the king. The forces of opposition were indeed too powerful for any ruler to contend against. To add to these difficulties in the situation were the political and commercial rivalries of European powers like the Dutch and the English.

#### His policy and aims

Though young, Marthanda Varma possessed political vision and foresight. But he was an autocrat who had scant respect for the rights and privileges of the people. It was his supreme aim to stamp out all elements of rebellion, and make royal authority supreme in the kingdom. "He wished

1. The full text of this treaty in which the Maharaja of Travancore is described as a Zamindar of Malabar is given in a later section of this chapter.
2. T. K. Velu Pillai has expressed the view that Travancore did not enter into any political relationship either with the Nayaks of Madura or with the Nawab of the Carnatic. This view is equally untenable. The fact is that the Travancore Maharajas continued to pay tribute to the Nayaks of Madura until the time of Meenakshi who died in 1739.