LORD LYONS

A RECORD OF BRITISH DIPLOMACY

BY

LORD NEWTON

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

ANNOTATED BY CRAIG THORNBER.

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ANNOTATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Richard Bickerton Pemell Lyons, 1st Earl Lyons GCB, GCMG, PC (26 April 1817 – 5 December 1887) was the son of the diplomat and admiral Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons and his mother was Augusta Louisa Rogers. Lyons had two sisters and brother. Anne Theresa Bickerton Lyons (1815 – 1894), became Baroness von Würtzburg. His brother was Captain Edmund Moubray Lyons (1819 – 1855). The second sister, Augusta Mary Minna Catherine Lyons (1821 – 1886), became Duchess of Norfolk. Lyons, throughout his career was an ardent Francophile.

Lord Lyons' early education was perhaps unusual for the time because the family accompanied his father on overseas postings. For his early education, Lyons was tutored at Elizabeth College, Guernsey, by Sir John Colborne, in Classics, English, French, arithmetic, and theology, where he received a Latin Prize in 1828. He and all of his siblings accompanied their father and mother to Valletta, Malta, in 1828. There they were homeschooled in the works of Enlightenment philosophy, including those of William Robertson, and in history and in classical civilisation, in French and in Modern Greek. After their first tour of the Aegean, Lyons's father returned to Valletta to refit his ship, HMS Blonde, before on 30 January 1829 sailing again for the Aegean with his two sons. They were tutored on the boat, and explored Greece on excursions into the mainland, and were introduced to prominent members of European society. Richard Lyons returned to England to attend Winchester College, and subsequently Christ Church, Oxford, from which he graduated BA (in 1838) and MA (in 1843).

Lord Lyons was reputed to be Queen Victoria's favourite diplomat. He served during the four great crises of the second half of the 19th century: Italian unification, the American Civil War, the Eastern Question, and the replacement of France by Germany as the dominant Continental power following the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. Lyons is know for his resolution of the *Trent* Affair during the American Civil War; his contribution to the Special Relationship and to the Entente Cordiale; and for predicting, 32 years before World War I, the occurrence of an imperial war between France and Germany that was to destroy Britain's international dominance.

Lyons served as British Ambassador to the United States from 1858 to 1865, during the American Civil War; and as British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1865 to 1867; then as British Ambassador to France from 1867 to 1887, which was then the most prestigious office in the British Service. Lyons was offered the office of British Foreign Secretary on three separate occasions, by three separate Prime Ministers (Gladstone, Disraeli, and Salisbury), and was encouraged to accept that office by Queen Victoria, but he declined the offer on all three occasions. Lyons endorsed the British Conservative Party faction of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, and was distrusted by Gladstonian Liberals as a "Tory-leaning diplomat".

The first volume of Lord Newton's biography concludes in 1871, when Lord Lyons was still in Paris. Lord Lyons had succeeded to his father's barony in 1858. He died before he had formally received the title of Earl Lyons: however, because the notice of his investiture with the title of Earl had appeared in the London Gazette, he is usually, termed 1st Earl Lyons, as in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Lyons did not marry and died without issue. His brother had predeceased him so his father's title became extinct.

Lord Newton's biography of Lord Lyons was published in 1913, about twenty-six years after his death and some thirty-three years after they first became acquainted. It is worth quoting a few lines from Lord Newton's autobiography, *Recollections,* where he records that in 1881, he arrived as a junior diplomat at the British Embassy in Paris where Lord Lyons was then British Ambassador. At that time, he was Thomas Wodehouse Legh and did not succeed to his father's barony until 1898. It is typical of Lord Newton's humour and self-deprecating manner that he tells the following story.

> I proceeded to my new post with considerable qualms, for a married attaché was a complete *rara avis* and I was haunted by a fear that our advent might be considered an unwarranted intrusion. My suspicions, however, turned out to be completely groundless and nothing could have exceeded the kindness of our welcome. This success was undoubtedly due to my wife, whose beauty and charm took everyone by storm, from Lord Lyons downwards.
>
> He was a man of such remarkable personality that he deserves a special mention. In appearance, he by no means suggested the diplomatist of fiction. He was a big, heavy man, with homely features, and represented a type which must now have almost completely disappeared — the man who lives only for his profession and has few interests outside it. He possessed few of the tastes of the average Englishman, hated exercise, never walked farther than to the English Church, about 100 yards distance from the Embassy; drank no wine and did not smoke. He would boast that he had spent six years in America without taking an alcoholic drink or making a speech.
>
> He was a model of sagacity and industry, with a profound knowledge of his profession which was unrivalled.

Lord Newton's wife was Evelyn Caroline Davenport, the daughter of William Bromley-Davenport M.P. of Capesthorne Hall in East Cheshire. She was clearly a considerable asset as she had the typical accomplishments of a young lady of her class in the days before women went to university. She could ride a horse, dance and speak French. Lord Newton remained at the embassy until 1886. Evelyn gave birth to their first child, Lettice, in London, on 7 November 1885.

Notes on the Annotation

When this volume was published in 1913, those purchasing and reading the volume would have been familiar with many of the people mentioned from published accounts of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War.. However, in 1913, the school leaving age was 12 and secondary education in Grammar Schools had to be paid for unless a scholarship was obtained. As a result, the book would have been read by only what were regarded as the middle and upper classes of society. One hundred and twelve years later, readers other than historians will be unfamiliar with many of the people mentioned. I have taken the opportunity to provide an annotated version of the book, introducing 336 footnotes. The vast majority of the information has been taken from *Wikipedia*, a source that is generally reliable for uncontroversial biographical

details and widely available on modern digital devices. Authoritative biographies are available from other sources such as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* but this is less readily available. For each person found, I have abstracted the full name and title with their years of birth and death and one or two sentences to explain their connection with Lord Lyons, his life and times. The information provided should prove sufficient for interested readers to find the full article on Wikipedia or in other sources. In a few cases it has been necessary to quote a location on a website, although it is appreciated that such information may not be accessible indefinitely.

The introduction of footnotes alters the lengths of the pages and repagination would require the book to be indexed again. To avoid this, I have retained the original pages separations. The range of pages in each chapter is shown in the footers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to than Eileen Monies for her expertise in the translation of the French phrases that feature in the language of diplomacy and the reports of letters and conversations involving Lord Lyons at the embassy in Paris.

LORD NEWTON'S PREFACE

It was the practice of the late Lord Lyons to preserve carefully the whole of his correspondence, whether official, semi-official, or private, and upon his death this accumulation of papers passed into the possession of his nephew, the present Duke of Norfolk.

I have been able to draw to some extent upon my own diary and recollections of the five years (1881-1886) during which I served as a member of Lord Lyons's staff at the Paris Embassy, but that period represents only a very small portion of his official career, and it is from the above mentioned papers that this work has been almost entirely compiled. All the material was placed unreservedly at my disposal, and I desire to make full acknowledgment of this mark of confidence. I desire also to express my gratitude to the numerous persons who have readily given their consent to the publication of important letters in which they possess a proprietary interest: notably to Emily Lady Ampthill, Lord Clarendon, Lord Derby, Lady Granville, Lady Ermyntrude Malet, Lord Rosebery, the Hon. Rollo Russell, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Sanderson.

I am indebted to Mr. J. F. Marshall and Mr. Alan Parsons for their assistance in sifting the enormous mass of documents found at Norfolk House, and to the Hon. Arnold Keppel for a service rendered at a subsequent period. Finally, I have to thank Mrs. Wilfrid Ward for an interesting contribution entitled "Lord Lyons in private life," containing personal details only available to a near relative.

NEWTON.

October, 1913._

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Lord Lyons. From Wikipedia article

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

Born in 1817, Richard Bickerton Pemell Lyons, second Baron and first Viscount and Earl Lyons, was the eldest son of the distinguished Admiral Sir Edmund (subsequently first Baron Lyons).[1] He was apparently destined like his younger brother[2] for a naval career, since at the age of ten he was already serving as an honorary midshipman. A sailor's life, however, must have been singularly uncongenial to a person of pronounced sedentary tastes whom nature had obviously designed for a bureaucrat; in after years he never alluded to his naval experiences, and it was probably with no slight satisfaction that the navy was exchanged for Winchester. From there he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1838, being apparently at that period a quiet, well-behaved, hard-working youth, living carefully upon a modest allowance, and greatly attached to his parents and family.

In the following year he entered the diplomatic service as unpaid attaché at Athens, where his father occupied

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the position of Minister. In 1844 he became a paid attaché at Athens, and passed thirteen uneventful years at that post.

At this stage of his career, prospects looked far from promising; he had started later than usual, being twenty-two at the period of his entry into the service; younger men were senior to him; he had had no opportunity of distinguishing himself at Athens, and as he laments in a letter to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Malmesbury,[3] written in April, 1852, he felt "mortified and humiliated that a man six years younger than himself had been passed over him as Secretary to the Legation in which he had served for thirteen years." Promotion indeed seemed so remote that, having reached the age of thirty-five, he seriously contemplated abandoning diplomacy altogether.

As a matter of fact, there was no cause for uneasiness. In 1852 he was transferred as paid attaché to Dresden, and early in the following year received the gratifying intimation that Lord John Russell,[4] who had been struck with his capacity, had appointed him paid attaché at Rome. "What I mean for him," wrote Lord John Russell, "is to succeed Mr. Petre,[5] and to conduct the Roman

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[1] Admiral Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons, GCB, GCMG, KCH (21 November 1790 – 23 November 1858) was an eminent British Admiral of the Royal Navy, and diplomat, who ensured Britain's victory in the Crimean War, during which he was Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, by his contribution at the Siege of Sevastopol (1854–1855) with both the Royal Navy and the British Army.

[2] Edmund Moubray Lyons (1819–1855). Captain in the Royal Navy who was killed in the Crimean War and died without issue.

[3] James Howard Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury, GCB, PC (25 March 1807 – 17 May 1889), styled Viscount FitzHarris from 1820 to 1841, was a British statesman of the Victorian era.

[4] John Russell, 1st Earl Russell (18 August 1792 – 28 May 1878), known as Lord John Russell before 1861, was the last British Whig and early Liberal statesman who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1846 to 1852 and again from 1865 to 1866. He was the third son of the 6th Duke of Bedford.

[5] George Glynn Petre (4 Sept. 1822-1905) was a British diplomat who joined the Diplomatic Service in 1846 as an attaché at the British Legation in Frankfurt, then the capital of the German Confederation, and

Mission, with £500 a year. If there were any post of Secretary of Legation vacant I should gladly offer it to him, as I have a very good opinion of him." The importance of the post at Rome consisted in the fact that, whereas technically dependent on the Tuscan Mission at Florence, it was virtually semi-independent, and might easily form an excellent stepping-stone to higher and more important appointments if activity and discretion were displayed.

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In June, 1853, Lyons started for his new post carrying despatches, and as an illustration of the conditions of travel upon the continent at that period, it is worth noticing that the expenses of his journey to Rome amounted to no less a sum than £102 3s. 3d., inclusive of the purchase and sale of a carriage, although no man was ever less prodigal of public money. Nor is there any record of any official objection to this somewhat alarming outlay.

In 1853 the Pontifical Government, exercising its sway over some 3,000,000 inhabitants of the Roman States, was in possession of no inconsiderable portion of the Italian peninsula, and presented the remarkable spectacle of a country jointly occupied by two foreign armies whose task it was to protect the Pope against his own subjects. With this object, 10,000 Austrians were stationed in the Ancona district, and 10,000 French troops in Rome, the latter paying their own expenses, but the former constituting a heavy charge upon the Holy Father with his embarrassed revenue and increasing deficit. The foreign policy of the Government was in the hands of Cardinal Antonelli, and not long after his arrival Lyons was able to write that in spite of "his peculiar position" (unaccredited to the Government in Rome), and that in some quarters England is regarded as the natural enemy of the Papacy, I have found that notwithstanding a very strong opinion to the contrary, at Rome, as at most other places, one succeeds best by transacting ones business in the most plain and straightforward manner, and through the most direct channels. By acting on this principle and by being very quiet and unobtrusive, I think I have in part allayed the suspicions which are felt towards us always more or less at Rome, and I am certainly

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on a better footing with Cardinal Antonelli than I had at all expected to be.

The business between His Majesty's Government and that of Rome was not of an overpowering nature, and was chiefly concerned with the proposed establishment of regular diplomatic relations; with the alleged intention of the Papal Government to create a Hierarchy in Scotland, and with the inconvenient zeal of ardent Protestants in the Papal dominions. As regards the establishment of diplomatic relations it seems highly doubtful whether the Papal Government really desired to see a new Protestant Mission at Rome: Cardinal Antonelli disclaimed any intention of creating Roman Catholic Bishops in Scotland, but the religious activity of British subjects in the Pope's dominions was a constant source of petty troubles. It must be admitted, however, that it was singularly easy to fall out with the Papal Government. The importation of Bibles was forbidden, the distribution of tracts was punished with imprisonment; one man of English extraction was incarcerated for a

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he was there during the revolutions of 1848. He moved to Hanover in 1852, Paris in 1853, The Hague in 1855 and Naples in 1856, where he was chargé d'affaires from July 1856 when the ambassador, Sir William Temple, left due to illness, until October of that year when diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were broken off. (Claude)

lengthy period because, according to his own statements, he had not communicated with sufficient regularity; and there were over 600 political prisoners in goal (jail) at Rome at the same time.

As for the official relations between England and the Papal Government they were friendly enough, and when the Crimean war broke out, feeling at the Vatican was strongly anti-Russian,

for it was believed that whereas the Roman Catholic Church had nothing to fear from Protestants and Mussulmans, the Greek schism was a real and threatening danger.

The following letter addressed to his brother, Captain Lyons, gives a not uninteresting description of the life led

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in Rome by an unmarried diplomatist without much private means, and incidentally shows the deep affection which he entertained for his family.

Lord Lyons to Captain Lyons
Rome, January 3rd, 1855.

> You may imagine what a relief to me it was, after reading your letter of the 18th, to see Admiral Dundas' arrival at Constantinople announced in the Malta paper.[6] Your letter of the 3rd is almost, indeed I think quite, the most interesting I ever read. The only drawback to the delight all these letters are to me, is that you were still lying up. That I hope is over, and that you will be very prudent about it. We have now a weekly post from Constantinople and Malta, which is a great comfort. Mention all the details you can in your letters about the siege and operations by sea and land. The Malta papers bring nothing that can be depended upon. Besides the intense interest, it is a great advantage to me diplomatically to have good intelligence to communicate here, and is a great help to getting information, which is useful to me, on Roman matters. Details about Sir E. and yourself are always the most precious things you can write, and they cannot be too numerous or too minute.
>
> My ménage consists of two men. I am obliged to have two, in order not to have to open the door myself, if I send one out. I have a good-sized sitting room, much better furnished than most Roman Lodgings, a second sitting room, which serves as Anteroom, and Breakfast Room, good Bedroom and a Dressing Room. I have very little sun, which I think an advantage, though in general it is thought the greatest of disadvantages. I breakfast at home, and dine with some of the other Diplomatists at a little quiet Table d'Hôte, where there is a very good dinner. In winter I dine out three or four times a week, and always spend the evening in society. I never do anything at all in the way of hospitality. With the immense number of English here, it would be impossible for me to get on, unless I made

[6] Admiral Sir James Whitley Deans Dundas, GCB (4 December 1785 – 3 October 1862) was a Royal Navy officer. He took part in the Napoleonic Wars, first as a junior officer when he took part in the Anglo-Russian invasion of Holland in Autumn 1799 and later as a commander when he was in action at Copenhagen Dockyard shortly after the capture of that City in August 1807. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean in 1852 and led all naval operations in the Black Sea including the bombardment of Sevastopol in October 1854 during the Crimean War.

this rule. In summer I had some men occasionally to play at Whist, all of course Foreigners. I have taken my present lodging to the end of June. My hope is to go to

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England for two or three months about that time. I pay between 14 and £15 sterling a month for my apartment. It is in a capital situation and a second floor. It is an admirable country for long rides, but very bad for short ones. The pavement of the Town is so slippery that it is dangerous to ride over it; most of the gates are at a very great distance, and after you pass them, you have a mile or two of stone wall, before you get out into the open country, which is beautiful and excellent for riding. The result is that I never do ride. Being almost the only Englishman here who has anything to do, beyond sight seeing and amusement, my hours do not suit my Countrymen. My great friend is a Count Gozze,[7] Austrian Secretary of Legation. He is an old Dresden friend of mine. Rome is a very rainy place, which obliges me often to hire a carriage to go out in the evening. The hired carriages are good, but dear, about nine shillings for an evening. Lord Walpole is here; no one else I think that you know. I have scribbled all this because you ask me, and because little details about the writer (if one really cares for him) are generally the most interesting parts of letters, written where there are no great events going on. You would think me oldwomanish if I mentioned half my anxieties about you and my Father.

A few months later, the brother, Captain Lyons, an exceptionally promising and gallant naval officer, died of wounds received before Sebastopol.

In 1856 promotion came in the shape of the secretaryship of Legation at Florence, but he continued to be employed in Rome, and stood twenty-second on a list of twenty-four secretaries of Legation. His prospects of further advance did not appear reassuring, and in March 1857, he writes to his father (now a peer), "My chance at present seems to rest almost entirely on Lord Clarendon's[8] disposition to give practical effect to the good

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opinion he expresses of me. I should trust with more confidence to that, if he had not promoted six secretaries of Legation before me during my residence here, and afterwards offered me as promotion the post of Secretary of Legation at Florence. Had it not been for your visit to England at the critical moment, I should now have been no more than simple Secretary of Legation, doing nothing at Florence."

In the autumn of 1857, Lord Normanby,[9] Minister at Florence, having gone on leave, Lyons was sent to take his place, and, instead of having nothing to do, found himself at once involved in one

[7] This may be misspelt as no record of him has been found.

[8] George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon (12 January 1800 – 27 June 1870) was an English diplomat and statesman. He served a succession of Whig and Liberal administrations. This included as Viceroy in famine-stricken Ireland and, on the first of three occasions as Foreign Secretary, as the United Kingdom's chief representative at the Congress of Paris which ended the Crimean War.

[9] Constantine Henry Phipps, 1st Marquess of Normanby, KG, GCB, GCH, PC (15 May 1797 – 28 July 1863), styled Viscount Normanby between 1812 and 1831 and known as The Earl of Mulgrave between 1831 and 1838, was a British Whig politician and author. He notably served as Lord Lieutenant of

of those trivial questions which so deeply exercised the diplomacy of a former generation, but which are now of rare occurrence.

Earlier in the year the Pope had paid a visit to Tuscany, and during his stay at Florence a banquet was held in his honour, to which the members of the diplomatic corps were invited. Much to their indignation they were not accommodated at the Tavola di Stato or Sovereign Table, where His Holiness was seated, and Lord Normanby, the British Minister, a K.G., Ex-Viceroy, and social magnate, considered that an apology was due from the Tuscan Government. Unfortunately for Lord Normanby, his colleagues, having previously agreed to support him, backed out of their undertaking, and the task of extracting an apology fell upon Lyons, for Lord Normanby had departed uttering dark threats that he would not return unless the apology was forthcoming. The Foreign Office took up the matter seriously, and for no less than three months an animated controversy was carried on, in the course of which "The Tuscan authorities showed themselves so thoroughly wrongheaded that

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every time the subject was mentioned they said or did something which made it more difficult for them to go back," and Lord Clarendon administered to them "a severe rebuke." Finally, whether owing to the severe rebuke or not, some sort of expression of regret was obtained; the injured Lord Normanby returned to his post, and Lyons resumed his duties at Rome. Whence he writes on March 6, 1858:—

> The question of Reforms in the Papal Administration, which was so much agitated during the Pope's journey and immediately afterwards, appears to be entirely forgotten. The repressive measures which have been adopted in France since the attempt on the Emperor[10] would seem to render it difficult for H.M. to urge other sovereigns to Liberal reforms. The mode in which the intelligence of the attempt was received at Rome was shocking. One can hardly say that any class expressed horror: the lower people openly declared their regret that the crime had not been successful, and the middle classes took little pains to conceal that they shared this feeling. In fact the policy which is supposed to be adopted by France of coquetting with the Liberal Party, without doing anything serious in their favour, has alienated the sympathies of this part of Italy.

Reforms of a simple character were evidently urgently needed in the Papal Administration, for just about this time a Canadian bishop and other British tourists were openly plundered on the main road between Rome and Civita Vecchia.

The turning point in Lyons's fortunes may be said to have arrived when early in March he received orders from Lord Malmesbury to proceed to Naples to inquire into the case of the *Cagliari*.

Ireland from 1835 to 1839 and as Home Secretary from 1839 to 1841 and was British Ambassador to France between 1846 and 1852.

[10] Napoleon III (Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte; 20 April 1808 – 9 January 1873) was President of France from 1848 to 1852 and then Emperor of the French from 1852 until his deposition in 1870. He was the first president, second emperor, and last monarch of France. He was a nephew of Emperor Napoleon I.

CHAPTER I

The *Cagliari* was a mail steamer plying between Genoa, Sardinia and Tunis, and on June 25, a number of

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Mazzinians who had taken passage in her seized the master and the crew, altered the course of the vessel, landed at the Island of Ponza in Neapolitan territory, where they liberated three hundred political prisoners, and subsequently proceeded to Sapri, in the neighbourhood of Salerno. Here they again disembarked, expecting the inhabitants to rise in their favour, but encountered a superior force of Neapolitan troops who killed or captured the whole party, whilst the *Cagliari* was seized by Neapolitan warships as she was making her way ostensibly to Naples. Some weeks later it was ascertained that amongst the prisoners in Naples were two English engineers, Watt and Park by name, and it was stated that these two men were entirely ignorant of the conspiracy, and had been forced by the conspirators to work the engines under threats of being summarily shot if they refused. Under the circumstances, as was only natural, application was made by the British Government that they should at least have a fair trial, and that the acting Vice-Consul at Naples should be permitted to visit them in gaol.

Diplomatic relations between England and the Neapolitan Government having been suspended for some years, Lord Clarendon wrote himself direct to Signor Carafa,[11] the Neapolitan Foreign Minister, in November, urging the necessity of dealing with the case in an equitable spirit, but with incredible perverseness and stupidity the Neapolitan Government continued to refuse upon one pretext or another either to release the men or to bring them to trial, or even to permit the Vice-Consul to visit them. In March, 1858, Watt and Park were still in gaol,

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and had been subjected to such abominable treatment that the health of both was completely broken down, and Watt had become partially insane. Under these circumstances, a change of government having in the meanwhile occurred in England, Lord Malmesbury directed Lyons to proceed at once to Naples and inquire into the case. Although the whole question had been considerably complicated, partly owing to a note of Sir James Hudson[12] to the Sardinian Government having been unaccountably altered by a member of his staff, and partly owing to a rooted belief on the part of high Neapolitan legal authorities that engineers were responsible for a ship's course, the Lyons Mission soon bore fruit, and the two unfortunate Englishmen were both set free, nominally on bail, before the end of the month, it having become evident to every one that they were absolutely innocent. But the Neapolitan Government was by no means out of its difficulties. It was pointed out that as two innocent men had been imprisoned for nine months, and treated with great barbarity during the greater part of the time, they were entitled to an indemnity which was fixed at £3000. Worse was to follow, for, egged on by the Sardinian Government, the British Government put forward a demand that the *Cagliari* should be surrendered on the ground that its capture had been illegally effected. Both these demands were refused, and finally, in May, 1858, a special messenger was sent to Naples instructing Lyons to leave unless within ten days the

[11] Carafa or Caraffa is the name of an old and influential Neapolitan aristocratic family of Italian nobles, clergy, and men of arts, known from the 12th century.
[12] Sir James Hudson GCB (1810 – 20 September 1885) was a British diplomat. He is noted for his time as British ambassador to Turin between 1852 and 1863, as an Italophile and strong supporter of Italian unification, and a collector of Italian art.

Neapolitan Government consented to accept mediation, and stating that England would make common cause with Sardinia under certain circumstances.

The message could not have been an agreeable one to deliver, and what the Neapolitan Government disliked

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more than anything else was the appearance of yielding to Sardinia. *"Ah! s'il n'y avait que l'Angleterre!"*[13] had always been the expression used by Signor Carafa; but his Government had placed itself hopelessly in the wrong, and Lyons was able to report that the indemnity would be paid, and that the *Cagliari* had been placed "at his disposal." It was an additional satisfaction to him to add that: "Far from threatening, I did not even go so far as my instructions warranted, for I did not say that His Majesty's Government proposed that the mediator should retire at the end of three months, nor did I tell Signor Carafa that I was myself ordered to go back to Rome if the mediation should be refused at the expiration of ten days."

In spite of the unpleasant nature of this affair, Lyons contrived to remain on the very best of terms with the Neapolitan Ministers with whom he had to deal, and Lord Malmesbury was so favourably impressed with his tact and skill that he at once appointed him Minister at Florence. His professional future was now assured; but far greater honours were in store for him, for in November, 1858, came the offer of the Washington Legation, an offer which, with characteristic modesty, he accepted with considerable misgivings as to his competence. Nor could it be said that success had arrived with unusual rapidity, for he was already forty-one.

In the same month he succeeded to the peerage on the death of his father. His mother had died some years previously; his brother had perished in the Crimea, and the only remaining near relatives were his two sisters, one of whom was married to the Duke of Norfolk, and the other to a Bavarian gentleman, Baron von Würtzburg.

[13] Ah! if it were only England.

CHAPTER II.

WASHINGTON, (1859-1860)

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In February, 1859, Lord Lyons, accompanied by some members of his staff (a novelty to one who hitherto had been obliged to work unaided) was despatched to Washington in H.M.S. *Curaçoa*, and owing to the limited coal capacity of that vessel, the voyage occupied no less than forty-two days, a period which must have been singularly disagreeable to a man who in spite of some years' naval service always suffered from sea sickness. The new Minister was received with marked courtesy by the U.S. authorities, and presented his letter of credence on April 12, Mr. Buchanan[14] being President at the time, and General Cass[15] occupying the position of Secretary of State.

Although the Presidential message of the previous December had contained some rather ominous passages with regard to the relations between England and the United States, the sentiments now expressed were friendly in character and showed a disposition to settle pending difficulties in an amicable spirit.

The first letter of importance addressed by Lord Lyons to Lord Malmesbury deals with the effect produced in the

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United States by the outbreak of war between France and Austria.

Lord Lyons to Lord Malmesbury
Washington, May 24, 1859.

> I had intended to write a despatch respecting the effect produced in the U.S. by the War in Europe, but we are so short of hands in the Chancery, that it is as much as we have been able to do to get through the regular matters of business which must be treated officially. I can however give you in a very few words an account of the state of feeling here, which is probably just what you would have expected it to be.
>
> The sympathies are all with France and against Austria, but they do not seem very strong; one sentiment however does appear to be both strong and universal--the desire to take advantage of the state of things in Europe to carry out American Views on this side of the Atlantic; in short to get hold of Mexico and Cuba. The present wish of the President is, I think, both to be and to appear to be on the best terms with us. He is careful to vindicate us, in the newspaper which is his organ, against all imputation of insincerity in Central

[14] James Buchanan Jr. (April 23, 1791 – June 1, 1868) was the 15th president of the United States, serving from 1857 to 1861. He also served as the secretary of state from 1845 to 1849 and represented Pennsylvania in both houses of the U.S. Congress.
[15] Lewis Cass (October 9, 1782 – June 17, 1866) was a United States Army officer and politician. He represented Michigan in the United States Senate and served in the Cabinets of two U.S. Presidents, Andrew Jackson and James Buchanan. He was also the 1848 Democratic presidential nominee. He was a slave owner.

American Affairs. The Departments are particularly attentive to all the smaller matters I have to bring before them, and apparently anxious to do what I ask. But here I am afraid the practical effect of their goodwill is likely to end. The Government is so weak that I do not think it would venture, even in a small matter, to do anything for us which would expose it to the least unpopularity. I feel my way cautiously, endeavouring to be very plain and firm upon clear British Questions, and to avoid doubtful topics as much as possible.

The immediate object of the President with regard to Mexico appears to be to avoid the ridicule which would be heaped upon him if the Government of Juarez were to fall immediately after the American Cabinet had at last made up their mind to recognize it. Instructions are, I am told, on the point of being sent to Mr. McLane[16] to negotiate a treaty with Mexico, partly, it is said, with the

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object of giving Juarez a little moral support, partly perhaps to get so advantageous a Treaty from him, as to engage public opinion here to declare itself more strongly in favour of his being upheld by the U.S. Whether Mr. McLane will be instructed (as Mr. Forsyth[17] was) to propose to purchase part of the Mexican territory, I am unable to say.

I am very much obliged by your sending out Mr. Warre,[18] and am impatiently expecting him. It is absolutely necessary to have a good man here to direct the Chancery; I think too this mission would be a very good school for a young man who really wished to learn his business, and I should welcome any one who was industrious, and wrote a thoroughly good legible hand.

It is particularly desirable that the Staff should be complete, because if the Minister is to have any knowledge of the Country and people, it is indispensable that he should visit, from time to time, the principal cities. This is not like a European State, in which politics and business are centred in the Capital, and can be studied more advantageously there than elsewhere. No political men make Washington their principal residence, in fact they cannot do so, as it sends no members to Congress, either to the Senate or the House of Representatives. Commerce it has none. It is in fact little more than a large village--and when Congress is not sitting it is a deserted village.

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[16] Louis McLane (May 28, 1786 – October 7, 1857) was an American lawyer and politician from Wilmington, in New Castle County, Delaware, and Baltimore, Maryland. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, a member of the Federalist Party and later the Democratic Party. He served as ambassador (Minister Plenipotentiary) to Great Britain, and president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

[17] John Forsyth Sr. (October 22, 1780 – October 21, 1841) was an American politician from Georgia. He represented the state in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and also served as the 33rd Governor of Georgia. As a supporter of the policies of President Andrew Jackson, Forsyth was appointed the 13th United States Secretary of State by Jackson in 1834, and continued in that role until 1841 during the presidency of Martin Van Buren.

[18] This cannot be Lieutenant-General Sir Henry James Warre KCB (12 January 1819 – 3 April 1898), a British Army officer and diplomat who had various assignments in North America as Lord Lyons refers to him as Mr. Warre and calls him a "young man".

Another letter dated May 30, shows that he was under no illusion as to the feelings entertained by a large section of the American public, while fully conscious of the difficulties with which the United States Government, however well intentioned, was forced to contend.

Lord Lyons to Lord Malmesbury.
Washington, May 30, 1859.

> You will anticipate from my private letter of the 24th my answer to your inquiry as to what would be the animus of this Government if England became involved in the present war.

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> The first notion both of Government and People would be to take advantage of the circumstance to take their full swing upon this side of the Atlantic, and especially so far as the people are concerned to get hold of Cuba and Mexico. The wiser heads see very distinctly the imprudence of fresh acquisitions of territory, and the great danger to the Union of introducing large Bodies of Citizens of Spanish and mixed Races. I believe this to be the feeling of the present Administration, but no administration disregards the popular cry.
>
> So far as I can learn, the American acquisitiveness is directed rather South than North, and is disposed to be content for the present, with what is most easy to lay hold of. Except on the part of the most rancorous of the Irish here there does not appear to be much desire of exciting disturbances in Canada or any of our Colonies.
>
> I think that if we were engaged in war the Americans would be (particularly with reference to neutral rights at sea) punctilious, exacting and quarrelsome to a degree. There is hardly any amount of violence to which a captain of an American man of war, if he were clearly in superior force, might not be expected to resort, in order to prevent American merchantmen being interfered with. And however outrageous in itself and opposed to International Law the conduct of the American officers might be, it would meet with enthusiastic applause from the multitude, and consequently the Government would not dare to disavow it. This admiration of bullying and violent proceedings on their own side, which appears to be universal among the populace here, and the want of firmness on the part of the Government in withstanding it, seem to me to constitute some of the greatest difficulties we should have to contend with in keeping at peace with America when we were at war with other Powers.
>
> I do not think the general sympathies of the Americans need be taken much into the account. The violent feelings aroused at particular conjunctures by the events of the war, or by special matters of dispute, are what will sway the mob, and therefore control the Government. The upper classes here

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> have certainly in general a strong sympathy with England; they are proud of her position in the world, they are anxious for her good opinion, they admire her political institutions, and are extremely discontented with those of their own country. But the upper classes keep

aloof from political life, and have little influence in public affairs. The mass of the Irish Emigrants appear to regard England with bitter hatred, their numbers give them weight in elections, but their moral power is small. I should hardly say that the Bulk of the American people are hostile to the old country but I think they would rather enjoy seeing us in difficulties. Those even who are most friendly like to gratify their pride by the idea of our being reduced to straits and of their coming to our rescue.

I conceive that the wish both of Government and people would certainly at first be to remain neutral, and reap all the advantages to their commerce which could not fail to result from that situation, and their interest in remaining at peace with us is so apparent and so immense, that it could not fail to tell for some time. But the People are irritable, excitable, and have a great longing to play the part of a first-rate power.

The Government would no doubt endeavour to maintain neutrality, but it would follow public feeling, and probably become exacting, captious, and (to use a term more expressive than classical) "bumptious" to a very irritating extent. A great deal would depend upon firmness on our side. If they thought they could attain their ends by threats and bluster, there would be no limit to their pretensions. Perhaps the best way to deal with them would be to gratify their vanity by treating them in matters of form as great people, being careful to communicate with them respecting our views and intentions in something the same manner as if they were really a considerable military power: to avoid interfering in matters in which we are not sufficiently interested to make it worth while to raise serious questions, and above all in matters directly affecting British interests and British Rights to be clear and distinct in our language, and firm and decided in our conduct, to convince them that when we are in the right and in earnest, we are more unyielding, not less so

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than formerly—in short to avoid as much as possible raising questions with them, but not to give way upon those we raise.

I need not remind you that these are the crude ideas of a man who has been only seven weeks in the country, and who has necessarily passed them in a small, and at this season, almost deserted town, which is merely the nominal Capital.

I am anxiously looking out for Mr. Warre, whose arrival you announce that I may soon expect. It would add much to the efficiency of the Mission, and be a great comfort to me to have an additional unpaid attaché, provided he were industrious, desirous to improve, and capable of writing a good hand.

The change of Government which took place in England during the summer substituted Lord John Russell for Lord Malmesbury at the Foreign Office, and following the example of his predecessor, Lord John desired to be supplied with confidential information by private letters.

Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, July 11, 1859.

At present the President and his Cabinet appear to desire both to be, and to be thought by the Public to be on the best terms with us. They are however so weak in Congress, that I doubt whether they would venture to do anything for us which would be the least unpopular. It is not therefore to be hoped that they will make any effort to open to us the Coasting Trade, to extend the provisions of the Reciprocity Treaty with Canada, to make a Copyright Convention, or, in short, take any liberal course in commercial matters. Nor indeed is it likely to be in their power to carry any measures tending to put us on equal terms with themselves in these respects. The Democratic spirit

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in this country appears to be all in favour of Protection and Exclusive Privileges. Happily the interest of the South is against a high Customs Tariff; and this checks the Protectionist Tendencies of the Manufacturing North.

Mr. Dallas[19] will have communicated to you the Statement which has been for months preparing here, of the views of this Government respecting neutral rights. The Cabinet, I understand, hope that they shall obtain great credit with the people for their efforts to establish American views on this point. They are very anxious to obtain our co-operation, and imagine, I think, that they may induce us to claim now concessions to Neutrals which would result in being a considerable restraint to our assertion for ourselves of Belligerent rights if we should become involved in war.

I think that our Relations with the U.S. require more than ever, at this moment, caution and firmness. Caution, to avoid raising questions with them, without a positive necessity; firmness, to make them feel that they cannot take advantage of the State of affairs in Europe to obtain undue advantages in matters directly affecting British Interests or British Rights. For my own part I endeavour to speak firmly and distinctly upon all matters which fall within the proper province of the British Minister in this country and to avoid all doubtful topics.

* * * * *

The Americans, both Government and People, are I think very much pleased by attentions and civilities, and very prone to fancy themselves slighted. This quality may be sometimes turned to good account, and should certainly be borne in mind when it is necessary to keep them in good humour.

One of the many questions which had for some time engaged the attention of the two Governments was the disputed ownership of the island of San Juan on the Pacific coast, and this case afforded an instance in which the Government of the United States was hampered by an agent whom it was not inclined to disavow. The

[19] George Mifflin Dallas (July 10, 1792 – December 31, 1864) was an American politician and diplomat who served as the 11th vice president of the United States from 1845 to 1849. He also served as the mayor of Philadelphia (1828-1829 and as the U.S. Minister to the United Kingdom from 1856 to 1861.

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culprit was a certain General Harney[20] who in a high-handed manner occupied the island without authorization, and conducted himself in a generally offensive manner, but although President Buchanan was considerably embarrassed by his action, he was too much afraid of the press and the mob to order the withdrawal of the troops. For some time there appeared to be a chance of an actual collision, and Lord John Russell showed considerable irritation.

Lord John Russell to Lord Lyons.
Abergeldie, Sept. 21, 1859.

> The affair of San Juan is very annoying. It is of the nature of the U.S. citizens to push themselves where they have no right to go, and it is of the nature of the U.S. Government not to venture to disavow acts they cannot have the face to approve. The best way perhaps would be that we should seize some other island to which we have as little right as the Americans to San Juan. But until we know the answer of the American Government to your note and the proceedings of Governor Douglas,[21] we can hardly give you instructions.
>
> If you could contrive a convention with the U.S. by which each Power should occupy San Juan for three or six months, each to protect person and property till the boundary question is settled, it will be the best arrangement that can be made for the present.

As a matter of fact the U.S. Government showed itself more reasonable than had been expected: a superior officer, General Scott,[22] was sent to settle matters, Harney, to use Lord John Russell's expression, was "left in the mud," and after a joint occupation and protracted negotiations the question of the ownership of San Juan was

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referred to the arbitration of the King of Prussia, who gave his award in favour of the United States some years later.

San Juan, however, was but one amongst a multitude of questions requiring solution, and the great difficulty which Lord Lyons had to contend with was—to use his own words, "The idea that, happen what may, England will never really declare war with this country has become so deeply rooted that I am afraid nothing short of actual hostilities would eradicate it." One of these questions concerned the Slave Trade.

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[20] William Selby Harney (August 22, 1800 – May 9, 1889), otherwise known among the Lakota as 'Woman Killer' and 'Mad Bear,' was an American cavalry officer in the US Army, who became known during the Indian Wars and the Mexican–American War for his brutality and ruthlessness.
[21] Sir James Douglas, KCB (August 15, 1803 – August 2, 1877) was a Canadian fur trader and politician who became the first Governor of the Colony of British Columbia. He is often credited as 'The Father of British Columbia'. In 1863, Douglas was knighted by Queen Victoria for his services to the Crown.
[22] Winfield Scott (June 13, 1786 – May 29, 1866) was an American military commander and political candidate. He served as Commanding General of the United States Army from 1841 to 1861, and was a veteran of the War of 1812, American Indian Wars, Mexican–American War, and the early stages of the American Civil War.

Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Dec 6, 1859.

> You will see by my despatches of this date, that there is very little prospect of any satisfactory result from our remonstrance concerning the Slave Trade. Lamentable as it is, I am afraid the President goes beyond public opinion already in the measures he takes against it. In the South the rendering it legal has many avowed advocates, and it is to be feared that some of the professed Abolitionists of the North derive too much profit from dabbling themselves in the trade to desire any efficient measures for its suppression. The greater part of the vessels engaged in it seem to be fitted out at New York. The state of feeling at this moment in the South upon the whole question of slavery is shocking. The Harper's Ferry affair seems to have excited Southern passions to an indescribable degree. The dissolution of the Confederation is but one of the measures which are loudly advocated. There are plans for the re-enslavement of all the emancipated negroes and for the purging the South of all whites suspected of Abolitionist tendencies. The difficulty which we shall have in obtaining decent treatment for coloured British subjects will be almost insuperable.

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> Another source of trouble between us and the Southern States may arise from the measures which they are taking to drive out all persons suspected of unorthodox notions on slavery, and the orthodox notion seems to be that slavery is a divine institution. In many parts of the South, Vigilance Committees are formed who turn people out at a moment's notice, without any pretext even of law. If any attempt is made to treat British subjects in this manner, I trust you will approve of my encouraging the Consuls to insist upon the law being observed in their case, and to resist any endeavour to inflict banishment or any other penalty upon an Englishman, except in due form of law. But it will require a great deal of prudence and discretion to act in each case, for a fair trial is a thing impossible in this country of election judges and partisan juries when party feeling is excited, and any redress we may exact for the wrong to England, will be too late for the individual in the hands of Lynch Law Assassins.
>
> The great hope is that the excitement is too violent to last, but before it subsides, it may do incalculable harm to these states and raise very painful and awkward questions for us.

If the hope expressed in the last paragraph was fallacious, the forebodings as to the possible tribulations of British subjects proved before long to be only too well founded.

Asked by Lord John Russell for his opinion on the position of affairs in Mexico, he points out *inter alia*, that--

> The actual annexation of Mexico to this Confederation raises immediately one of those questions between the Northern and Southern States which have already gone a great way to dissolve the Union altogether. The Southern States desire the addition of territory *south*, with a view to extending slavery and adding to the Pro-Slavery votes in the U.S. Senate.

To this the North is conscientiously opposed on religious grounds, to say nothing of the indignation it feels at the

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notion of its own vast superiority in wealth and population being swamped in the Senate. Even now, since every State sends equally two senators, whatever may be its population, the North has not the influence it ought to have in the Senate which is the more important branch of the Legislature. As the religious sentiment in the North approaches very nearly to fanaticism, and as the Southern feeling on the point has become furious passion, there is little chance of their coming to an agreement upon a matter which calls these feelings into play. In this particular question the South have on their side the national vanity which seems always childishly gratified by any addition to the already enormous extent of the territory. In the meantime the course of events seems to be bringing about the gradual annexation of Mexico. The Mexicans in the northern part of their country have fallen to that point, that they can neither maintain order on the frontier nor hold their own against the savage Indians within it. They will (to use an American expression) be "squatted out" of their country whenever and wherever any considerable number of the more energetic race choose to settle. But this is a very different thing from the sudden incorporation of a vast territory and of a large population totally different in race, language, religion and feeling, and (so far as the experiment has been tried) utterly incapable of maintaining order among themselves under the U.S. system of government. All the wiser and more conservative politicians in this country deprecate as an unmitigated evil the sudden annexation of Mexico; nor are such men willing to undertake a protectorate of Mexico. This they say would be an enormous innovation upon their whole political system which has never admitted of any other connection than that of perfectly equal sovereign states, bound by a Federal tie on terms the same for all.

The Presidential Message of December, 1859, was noticeable for an earnest appeal to the North and South to cultivate feelings of mutual forbearance.

The message also made clear the policy of the President towards Mexico; in accordance with the principles of

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the Monroe doctrine, European intervention in that country was repudiated, and American intervention recommended.

A passage referring to San Juan while obviously intended to exculpate General Harney, paid a handsome tribute to the moderation and discretion shown by the British Admiral (Baynes)[23] commanding on the Pacific station; and the President in conversation expressed the hope that the approaching close of his administration would leave "a clear score" with England. No doubt President Buchanan was sincere in his expressions, but unfortunately, early in 1860, signs were not wanting, that in the distracted state of the country owing to the rising passions between North

[23] Admiral Sir Robert Lambert Baynes KCB (4 September 1796 – 7 September 1869) was a British Royal Navy admiral who as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Station helped prevent the 1859 Pig War from escalating to a major conflict between the United States and the United Kingdom.

and South, many people believed that a foreign war would be the best means of promoting unity, nor was there much doubt as to which foreign country would be selected for the experiment.

Washington has already been disrespectfully alluded to as little better than a large village, and as bearing little resemblance to an ordinary capital, but it is evident that Lord Lyons found plenty of enjoyment there. He was on excellent terms personally with the State officials and his diplomatic colleagues; liked the members of his staff, and above all rejoiced in the fact that there was plenty of work to be done—a good deal more, indeed, than the ordinary person would have approved of. One of his few complaints is that he is much beset by the inventors of implements of war. "I have not the slightest knowledge practical or theoretical respecting implements of war, and should consequently never be justified in recommending one more than another to the

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authorities at home. I absolutely decline to see, touch, or have brought into my house any explosive material, I should not feel easy at having even in a garret such a box as you (the Consul at New York) have received for Her Majesty. I should be inclined to ask for authority from England to sink it in the Atlantic Ocean."

"I am getting on tolerably well here, I hope, on the whole, and have no complaints to make of the Americans," he admits in letters to other correspondents, and adds: "I am afraid marriage is better never than late. The American women are undoubtedly very pretty, but my heart is too old and too callous to be wounded by their charms. I am not going to be married either to the fascinating accomplished niece of the President, or to the widow of a late Foreign Minister, or to any other maiden or relict to whom I am given by the newspapers."

These sentiments sound rather rash even at the age of forty-two, but they remained unchanged. It would be incorrect to describe him as a misogynist, but he successfully withstood all attempts to marry him. In after years, an exalted personage (neither Queen Victoria nor the Empress Eugenie[24]) was so insistent upon the advisability of his espousing one of her ladies-in-waiting, that she eventually couched her proposal in the form of an ultimatum. Lord Lyons asked for and obtained a delay of twenty-four hours, and decided upon consideration to refuse. In view of an event which occurred not long afterwards the decision proved to be a prudent one, and probably confirmed him in the suspicions which he appeared to entertain of the opposite sex.

It had been decided that the Prince of Wales[25] should make a tour in Canada in the summer of 1860, and the

[24] Eugénie de Montijo (born María Eugenia Ignacia Agustina de Palafox y Kirkpatrick; 5 May 1826 – 11 July 1920) was Empress of the French from her marriage to Napoleon III on 30 January 1853 until he was overthrown on 4 September 1870. From 28 July to 4 September 1870, she was the de facto head of state of France.

[25] Edward VII (Albert Edward; 9 November 1841 – 6 May 1910) was King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India, from 22 January 1901 until his death in 1910. He was the second child and eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Edward, nicknamed 'Bertie'. He was Prince of Wales at this period.

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Duke of Newcastle,[26] at that time Colonial Secretary, consulted Lord Lyons as to the advisability of H.R.H. paying a visit to America. The latter, upon consideration, pronounced in favour of it. He did not arrive at this decision without some hesitation. It was feared by persons of experience that the disaffected Irish in New York and elsewhere might make themselves disagreeable; the Prince's time was limited, and he would obviously be unable to make an extended tour, and so might involuntarily cause offence, whilst it was highly probable that the necessity for preserving a strictly non-official character might also give rise to difficulties.

On the other hand, President Buchanan extended an invitation in such cordial terms that it would have been ungracious to decline.

Lord Lyons joined the Prince of Wales in Canada in August, and the tour must have been an agreeable change even to a person of his sedentary inclinations. Since his arrival at Washington, fifteen months before, he had never slept or been six miles outside the town. "Whenever," he explains to a friend, "I have planned a journey, I have been stopped by invasions of islands in the Pacific or some other 'difficulty' as a dispute is called here." It may be surmised, however, that such obstacles were much less objectionable to him than they would have been to any one else; he hated travel, openly avowed that he loathed sight-seeing, and welcomed the opportunity of "getting Niagara and the Lakes done this way; it will be a good thing over."

It was eventually decided that the Prince's visit to the States should take place in September, and the announcement was not only received with unbounded satisfaction, but caused prodigious excitement. "The

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President was moved from the usual staid solemnity of his demeanour by his gratification at receiving an answer from Her Majesty written with her own hand. At the close of our interview he hurried off with it in great delight (no doubt to show it to his niece) saying: 'It is indeed something to have an autograph letter from Queen Victoria![27] Nor was the President's gratification confined to the family circle, for he asked and obtained permission to publish the royal letter which had afforded so much satisfaction. As soon as the news became known invitations of every kind at once began to pour in from all quarters, and offerings of the most varied description made their appearance at the Legation, which included such objects as equestrian sugar statues of H.R.H., pots of ointment for the Queen, books of sermons for 'Baron Renfrew,'[28] and a set of plates for the 'Prince of Whales.' Innumerable requests arrived too for interviews, autographs, and mementos, amongst which may be cited an application for a photograph from a citizen of Lowell "for his virgin wife.'''

[26] Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, 5th Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyme, KG, PC (22 May 1811 – 18 October 1864), styled Earl of Lincoln before 1851, was a British politician. He sat in Parliament for South Nottinghamshire (1832–46) and for Falkirk Burghs (1846–51) until inheriting the dukedom. He held several key offices in the mid-19th century, including Chief Secretary for Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.
[27] Lord Lyons to Lord J. Russell, July 9
[28] Baron of Renfrew is a dignity in the Baronage of Scotland held by the heir apparent to the British throne.

It was, of course, unfortunately necessary to decline the invitations, for the itinerary had been settled beforehand, and it had been wisely decided that the Prince should never stay with any private individual, but always be lodged at an hotel at his own expense, that he should refuse to receive addresses and deputations, and should neither hear nor make public speeches. It was also considered desirable that receptions of British subjects should not be encouraged, and that he should not attend any demonstration of his fellow-countrymen so as not to excite any feeling of jealousy.

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As for the gifts which were proffered in great profusion, they were regretfully declined in accordance with the usual practice of the Royal Family.

In spite of the nominally private character of the Prince of Wales's tour in the United States, most careful arrangements were found to be necessary wherever he made a stay. At New York, in particular, which city appears to be, beyond all others, interested in Royal personages, the programme could hardly have been of a more elaborate nature had an Emperor been visiting an Imperial Sire and Brother; even the ladies with whom H.R.H. was expected to dance, having been selected long in advance. The chief difficulty in New York and elsewhere seems to have been the prohibition of speeches at banquets. The Americans, overflowing with hospitable enthusiasm, were only too anxious to display their friendship in public utterances, but the British Government had wisely decided that nineteen was too early an age at which to begin making speeches in a foreign country, and the rule of silence was rigidly adhered to.

The Prince of Wales's tour, although necessarily brief, included, besides Washington, some of the principal cities in the States, and judging from the contemporary correspondence, was attended by singularly few untoward incidents, proving, in fact, successful beyond expectation.

The happy effect produced by this visit was described in an official despatch, and private letters corroborate the favourable impression created.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Griffiths
November 10, 1859

> I have more completely realized, as the Americans say, the wonderful success of the Prince of Wales's tour than I did when it was in progress. I have now had time to talk quietly about it with men whose opinion is worth

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> having, and also to compare newspapers of various shades of politics. I am glad to see that the incognito and other restrictions maintained are represented as a peculiar compliment to the Americans as showing a desire to associate with them on more equal terms than would be possible with subjects.[29]
>
> The Prince of Wales's tour in the U.S. went off completely to the satisfaction of all parties from the beginning to the end. It was rather hard work for me, as he never went out without

[29] Lord Lyons to the Duke of Newcastle, Oct. 29.

> me, nor I without him, and I had quantities of letters to write and people to see and keep in good humour. Nevertheless H.R.H. himself and all the people with him were so agreeable, that on the whole I enjoyed the tour very much while it was going on. I look back to it with unmixed satisfaction."

Much of the success, although he was too modest to allude to it, was probably due to his own carefulness and forethought.

CHAPTER III

OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR. THE *TRENT* CASE. (1860-1861)

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Before the close of 1860 the relations between North and South had reached the critical stage: the mutterings of the coming storm grew louder, and when it became clear, in November, that Abraham Lincoln[30] was to be the new President, secession advanced with rapid strides, while conviction became general that a collision was inevitable.

Lord Lyons to the Duke of Newcastle
Dec. 10, 1860.

> It is difficult to believe that I am in the same country which appeared so prosperous, so contented, and one may say, so calm when we travelled through it. The change is very great even since I wrote to you on the 29th October. Our friends are apparently going ahead on the road to ruin with their characteristic speed and energy.
>
> The President (Buchanan) is harassed beyond measure. It is a very unfortunate moment for our negotiations, but the present state of things makes me more than ever anxious to get the San Juan question safely landed beyond the reach of the incoming administration.

The approaching rule of Lincoln entailed the disquieting probability of the appointment of Mr. Seward[31] as Secretary of State.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell
Washington, Jan. 7, 1861.

> It is considered almost certain that Mr. Seward is to be Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of State. This will be regarded as a defiance of the South, unless (as is expected) Mr. Seward comes out with a conciliatory speech in the Senate. With regard to Great Britain, I cannot help fearing that he will be a dangerous Foreign Minister. His view of the relations between the United States and Great Britain has always been that they are a good material to make political capital of. He thinks at all events that they may be safely played with without any risk of bringing on a war. He has even to me avowed his belief that England will never go

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[30] Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) was the 16th president of the United States, serving from 1861 until his assassination in 1865. He led the United States through the American Civil War, defeating the Confederate States of America and playing a major role in the abolition of slavery.

[31] William Henry Seward (May 16, 1801 – October 10, 1872) was an American politician who served as United States Secretary of State from 1861 to 1869, and earlier served as governor of New York and as a United States senator. A determined opponent of the spread of slavery in the years leading up to the American Civil War, he was a prominent figure in the Republican Party in its formative years, and was praised for his work on behalf of the Union as Secretary of State during the Civil War. He also negotiated the treaty for the United States to purchase the Alaska Territory.

to war with the United States. He has generally taken up any cry against us, but this he says he has done from friendship, to prevent the other Party's appropriating it and doing more harm with it than he has done. The temptation will be great for Lincoln's party, if they be not actually engaged in a civil war, to endeavour to divert the public excitement to a foreign quarrel. I do not think Mr. Seward would contemplate actually going to war with us, but he would be well disposed to play the old game of seeking popularity here by displaying violence towards us. I don't think it will be so good a game for him as it used to be, even supposing we give him an apparent triumph, but I think he is likely to play it.

This makes me more than ever anxious to settle the San Juan question.

The forebodings came true. Mr. Seward, a lawyer, who had aimed at the Presidency himself, became Secretary of State, and caused the British Government and the diplomatists at Washington many uncomfortable moments.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, March 26, 1861.

Mr. Seward came to me on the evening of the 20th ultimo, and asked me to let him speak to me very confidentially.

Mr. Seward observed that he considered it all important to ward off a crisis during the next three months; that he had good hopes that if this could be effected a counter revolution would take place in the South; that he hoped and believed it would begin in the most distant State, Texas, where indeed he saw symptoms of it already. It might be necessary towards producing this effect to make the Southern States feel uncomfortable in their present condition by interrupting their commerce. It was however most important that the new Confederacy should not in the mean time be recognized by any Foreign Power.

I said that certainly the feelings as well as the interests of Great Britain would render H.M.'s Government most desirous to avoid any step which could prolong the quarrel between North and South, or be an obstacle to a cordial and speedy reunion between them if that were possible. Still I said, if the U.S. determined to stop by force so important a commerce as that of Great Britain with the cotton-growing States, I could not answer for what might happen.

Mr. Seward asked whether England would not be content to get cotton through the Northern Ports, to which it could be sent by land.

I answered that cotton, although by far the most important article of the Trade, was not the only point to be considered. It was however a matter of the greatest consequence to England to procure cheap cotton. If a considerable rise were to take place in the price of cotton, and British ships were to be at the same time excluded from the Southern Ports, an immense pressure would be put upon H.M.'s Government to use all the means in their

power to open those Ports. If H.M.'s Government felt it to be their duty to do so, they would naturally endeavour to effect their object in a manner as

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consistent as possible first with, their friendly feelings towards both Sections of this Country, and secondly with the recognized principles of International Law. As regards the latter point in particular, it certainly appeared that the most simple, if not the only way, would be to recognize the Southern Confederacy. I said a good deal about my hopes that Mr. Seward would never let things come to this, with which it is unnecessary to trouble you.

I thought that Mr. Seward, although he did not give up the point, listened with complacency to my arguments against interference with Foreign Commerce. He said more than once that he should like to take me to the President to discuss the subject with him. The conclusion I came to was that the questions of a forcible collection of the duties in the Southern Ports, and of a blockade of those Ports were under discussion in the Cabinet, but that Mr. Seward was himself opposed to those measures, and had good hopes that his opinion would prevail.

It would appear however that a change took place in the interval between this conversation and yesterday. Mr. Seward, the principal Members of the Cabinet, the Russian Minister, M. de Stoeckl,[32] and the French Minister, Mons. Mercier,[33] with some other people dined with me. After dinner, Mr. Seward entered into an animated conversation with my French and Russian Colleagues, and signed to me to join them. When I came up I found him asking M. Mercier to give him a copy of his Instructions to the French Consuls in the Southern States. M. Mercier made some excuse for refusing, but said that what the instructions amounted to was that the Consuls were to do their best to protect French Commerce *sans sortir de la plus stricte neutralité*. Mr. Seward then asked me to give him a copy of my instructions to H.M.'s Consuls. I, of course, declined to do so, but I told him that the purport of them was that the Consuls were to regard questions from a commercial not a political point of view, that they were to do all they could to favour the continuance of peaceful commerce short of performing an act of recognition without the orders of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Seward then alluded to the Peruvian Papers, and speaking as he had done all along very loud,

[32] Eduard Guillaume Andreevich Stoeckl (1804 – 26 January 1892) was a Russian diplomat best known today for having negotiated the American purchase of Alaska on behalf of the Russian government. He was born in 1804 in Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, where his father, Andreas von Stoeckl, was serving as an Austrian diplomat.

[33] Edouard Henri Mercier (1816 – 1886) was the French ambassador to the United States from July 1860 through December 1863 during the American Civil War (1861–1865). He is most noted for playing a key diplomatic role in the Trent Affair.

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said to my French and Russian Colleagues and me, "I have formed my opinion on that matter, and I may as well tell it to you now as at any other time. I differ with my Predecessor as to d*e facto* Authorities. If one of your Ships comes out of a Southern Port without the Papers required by the laws of the U.S., and is seized by one of our Cruisers and carried into New York and confiscated, we shall not make any compensation." My Russian Colleague, M. de Stoeckl, argued the question with Mr. Seward very good humouredly and very ably. Upon his saying that a Blockade to be respected must be effective, Mr. Seward replied that it was not a blockade that would be established; that the U.S. Cruisers would be stationed off the Southern Coast to collect duties, and enforce penalties for the infraction of the U.S. Customs Laws. Mr. Seward then appealed to me. I said that it was really a matter so very serious that I was unwilling to discuss it; that his plan seemed to me to amount in fact to a paper blockade of the enormous extent of coast comprised in the Seceding States; that the calling it an enforcement of the Revenue Laws appeared to me to increase the gravity of the measure, for it placed Foreign Powers in the Dilemma of recognizing the Southern Confederation, or of submitting to the interruption of their Commerce.

Mr. Seward then went off into a defiance of Foreign Nations, in a style of braggadocio which was formerly not uncommon with him, but which I had not heard before from him since he had been in office. Finding he was getting more and more violent and noisy, and saying things which it would be more convenient for me not to have heard, I took a natural opportunity of turning, as host, to speak to some of the ladies in the room.

M. de Stoeckl and M. Mercier inferred, as I do, that within the last two days the opinion of the more violent party in the Cabinet had prevailed, at all events for the moment, and that there is a danger that an interference with Foreign Trade may take place at any moment. I hope that it may still be prevented by the fear of its producing a recognition of the Southern Confederacy. But I am afraid we must be prepared for it.

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It may perhaps be well, with a view to the effect on this Government, that the Commissioners who are on their way to Europe from the Southern States should not meet with too strong a rebuff in England or in France. Such a rebuff would be a great encouragement to violent measures. In fact, notwithstanding my contradictions, the Senate, and indeed, I fear, the President is not uninfluenced by the bold assertions made by some Members of the violent Party that they have positive assurances from Y.L. and other Members of H.M.'s Government that *under no circumstances whatever* will Great Britain recognize the independence of the South.

M. Mercier thinks it advisable that he and I should have a discretionary Power to recognize the South. This seems to me to be going too fast. I should feel a good deal embarrassed by having such a power in my pocket, unless the contingency in which it was to be used should be most clearly stated. What does appear to be of extreme importance is that England and France should act in concert.

Lincoln had been inaugurated as President in March, and in the following month the long-awaited collision occurred at Charleston, when the Confederates opened fire upon and captured Fort Sumter. The forts in Charleston harbour had by common consent become the test case, and the capture of Fort Sumter signalized the fact that a population of little over 5 millions of white men had had the audacity to challenge over 22 millions of their fellow-countrymen.

Charleston, by the way, besides its importance in American history, seems to have been a place where slavery was a very thorough-going institution, judging from the following advertisement in the *Mercury*, of March 25th, 1861.

NOTICE. TEN DOLLARS REWARD.

> Runaway on Friday night, March 23rd, my woman "Silvey," about forty years of age, of a light brown complexion, and has spots on her face as if done with powder, and limps a little, and speaks

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> very low when spoken to. She formerly belonged to the Rev. Mr. Keith, and of late to Johnson the tailor, in King Street, near George Street. When she left she had a chain around her ankles to keep her from going off, but she went anyhow. Apply to P. Buckheit, north-west corner of Line and Meeting Streets.

Mr. W. H. Russell,[34] the well-known correspondent, was in Charleston a few days after the fall of Fort Sumter, and wrote as follows:----

Charleston, April 19, 1861.

> I arrived here the night before last *via* Baltimore, Norfolk and Wilmington. North Carolina was in revolt—that is, there was no particular form of authority to rebel against, but the shadowy abstractions in lieu of it were treated with deserved contempt by the "citizens," who with flint muskets and quaint uniforms were ready at the various stations to seize on anything, particularly whisky, which it occurred to them to fancy. At Wilmington, I sent a message to the electric telegraph office for transmission to New York, but the "citizens" of the Vigilance Committee refused to permit the message to be transmitted and were preparing to wait upon me with a view of asking me what were my general views on the state of the world, when I informed them peremptorily that I must decline to hold any intercourse with them which I the more objected to do in that they were highly elated and excited by the news from Sumter. I went over the works with General Beauregard:[35] the

[34] Sir William Howard Russell, CVO (28 March 1827 – 10 February 1907) was an Irish reporter with The Times, and is considered to have been one of the first modern war correspondents. He spent 22 months covering the Crimean War, including the Siege of Sevastopol and the Charge of the Light Brigade. He later covered events during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the American Civil War, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-Prussian War. His dispatches from Crimea to *The Times* are regarded as the world's first war correspondence.

[35] Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard (May 28, 1818 – February 20, 1893) was an American military officer known as being the Confederate general who started the American Civil War at the battle of Fort

> military injury done to Sumter is very trifling, but Anderson's defence, negative as it was, must be regarded as exceedingly creditable to him.
>
> In a week's time the place will be a hard nut to crack. One thing is certain: nothing on earth will induce the people to return to the Union. I believe firmly their present intention is to march upon Washington, if it were merely as a diversion to carry the war away from their interior.

War having now actually broken out, the question of the blockade of the Southern ports became all important for England.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, April 15, 1861.

> I am getting very uneasy about the intention of the Government with regard to stopping intercourse with Southern Ports. Now that war has begun it seems difficult to suppose that they will abstain from taking advantage of their one great superiority, which is their navy. I suppose that a regular blockade would be less objectionable than any such measures as closing the Southern Ports as Ports of entry, or attempting to collect duties for the U.S. by ships stationed off them. The rules of a blockade are to a great extent determined and known, and our ships could at all events resort to any Ports before which the U.S. did not establish a regular effective blockade. But if the U.S. are to be permitted to seize any ship of ours wherever they can find her within their jurisdiction on the plea that by going to a Southern port she has violated the U.S. custom laws, our commerce will be exposed to vexations beyond bearing, and all kinds of new and doubtful questions will be raised. In fact, this, it seems to me, would be a paper blockade of the worst kind. It would certainly justify Great Britain and France in recognizing the Southern Confederacy and sending their fleets to force the U.S. to treat British and French vessels as neutrals in conformity with the law of nations.
>
> Just as Mr. Seward was confident that he had prevailed in the Cabinet, the President and the violent party suddenly threw over his policy. Having determined not to resign, he pretends to be pleased, and one of his colleagues says of him that in order to make up for previous lukewarmness he is now the fiercest of the lot. It is a great inconvenience to have him as the organ of communication from the U.S. Government. Repeated failures have not convinced him that he is not sure to carry his point with the President and the Cabinet. He is therefore apt to announce as the fixed intentions

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Sumter on April 12, 1861. Trained in military and civil engineering at the United States Military Academy, West Point, Beauregard served with distinction as an engineer officer in the Mexican–American War. He resigned from the United States Army and became the first brigadier general in the Confederate States Army. He commanded the defences of Charleston, South Carolina, at the start of the Civil War at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Three months later he helped win the First Battle of Bull Run near Manassas, Virginia.

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of his Government what is in reality no more than a measure which he himself supports.

I am in constant apprehension of some foolish and violent proceeding of the Government with regard to Foreign Powers. Neither the President nor any man in the Cabinet has a knowledge of Foreign Affairs; they have consequently all the overweening confidence in their own strength which popular oratory has made common in this country. I believe the best chance of keeping them within bounds will be to be very firm with them, particularly at first, and to act in concert with France, if that be possible.

As I have mentioned in my despatches, information coming from the Southern Commissioners sent to negotiate with the Government here, it may be as well to mention that they did not seek any intercourse with me, and that I never had any communication with them, direct or otherwise. I do not know that I should have thought it necessary to refuse to communicate with them, if it had been proposed to me, but the fact is as I have just said.

The policy of acting in conjunction with France was adopted with considerable success, as will appear later, but hitherto the British Government had not given any very clear lead, Lord John Russell contenting himself with the view that he relied upon "the wisdom, patience, and prudence of the British Minister to steer safely through the danger of the crisis." It was absolutely necessary, however, to deal with the Blockade Question, and the Cabinet consulted the Law Officers of the Crown, with the result that the Southern States were recognized as belligerents.

Lord John Russell to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, May 6, 1861.

I cannot give you any official instructions by this mail, but the Law Officers are of opinion that we

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must consider the Civil War in America as regular war—*justum bellum*—and apply to it all the rules respecting blockade, letters of Marque which belong to neutrals during a war. They think moreover it would be very desirable if both parties would agree to accept the Declaration of Paris regarding the flag covering the goods and the prohibition of privateers.

You will of course inform our naval officers that they must conform to the rules respecting Blockade, of which they are I believe in possession. The matter is very serious and very unfortunate.

An important conversation took place on May 17, between Lord J. Russell and Mr. Adams,[36] the new American Minister in London, in which the latter went so far as to state that Lord John

[36] Charles Francis Adams Sr. (August 18, 1807 – November 21, 1886) was an American historical editor, writer, politician, and diplomat. As United States Minister to the United Kingdom during the American Civil War, Adams was crucial to Union efforts to prevent British recognition of the Confederate States of

Russell's language to his predecessor, Mr. Dallas, had been construed in an unfavourable light in the United States, and that he was afraid that his own mission might come to an end unless the unfavourable impression was corrected. He further complained of the recognition of the South as a belligerent. Lord John Russell in reply declined to give an undertaking that, apart from belligerent rights, England would never recognize the Southern States, but he endeavoured to make it clear that, if anything, popular sympathy in England was with the North, and that H.M. Government were only desirous of maintaining a strict neutrality. Any one reading the correspondence of the period cannot fail to realize that Lord John Russell was perfectly sincere in his expressed wish to preserve perfect impartiality, in spite of the querulous and acrimonious tone which occasionally characterized his communications.

Lord Lyons, on his side, was only too anxious to avoid the slightest semblance of anything which might cause

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offence to the United States Government. He was constantly impressing upon the various Consuls that, strict neutrality being the policy of H.M. Government, they must not be led away by their sympathies, but confine themselves to obeying orders. He vetoed the requests for warships, which they occasionally clamoured for, in the traditional consular spirit, and urged caution upon the British naval Commanders and the Canadian authorities. Fortunately, both Admiral Milne[37] and Sir Edmund Head,[38] the Governor-General of Canada, were prudent and tactful men, who ably co-operated with him. With both of these he corresponded confidentially, and made no secret of the apprehensions which he entertained.

Lord Lyons to Sir E. Head.
Washington, May 22, 1861.

> You will perhaps consider the notion that the U.S. should at this moment provoke a war with a great Power as preposterous, and *à priori* it must seem incredible to any one. Nevertheless I am so seriously alarmed by what I see passing around me here and especially by the conduct of the Cabinet that I have thought it my duty to call the attention of our Government to the danger which I conceive to exist. To avert it is the main object of all I do here. I am afraid however that things are coming to a point at which my diplomacy will be completely at fault.

America and maintain European neutrality to the utmost extent. Adams also featured in national and state politics before and after the Civil War.

[37] Admiral of the Fleet Sir Alexander Milne, 1st Baronet, GCB (10 November 1806 – 29 December 1896) was a Royal Navy officer. He became Commander-in-Chief, North America and West Indies Station and in this role he acted with diplomacy, especially in response to the Trent Affair on 8 November 1861 during the American Civil War, when USS San *Jacinto*, commanded by Union Captain Charles Wilkes, intercepted the British mail packet RMS *Trent* and removed, as contraband of war, two Confederate diplomats, James Mason and John Slidell.

[38] Sir Edmund Walker Head, 8th Baronet, KCB (16 February 1805 – 28 January 1868) was a 19th-century British politician and diplomat. In 1854, Head was appointed Governor General of the Province of Canada. He served until 1861.

I could write a great deal to explain my reasons for fearing that if a war be not imminent the risk is at any rate so great that it ought at once to be guarded against. My mind is almost unremittingly employed in devising means to maintain the peace. In this, even more than in ordinary cases, I think the best safeguard will be found in being evidently prepared for war. Nothing is so likely to

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prevent an attack as manifest readiness to prevent one. I have thought it right to state to H.M. Government my opinion that it is not even now too soon to put Canada into a complete state of defence and to provide both in the West Indies and on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts the means of resisting attack in case of war or of making our neutrality respected if peace can be maintained.

Canada is, as you know, looked upon here as our weak point. There are in the Cabinet men who are no doubt as ignorant of the state of feeling in Canada as they were of that in the Southern States and who believe that there is a strong American feeling in Canada. You will not have forgotten that Mr. Seward, during the Presidential canvass, publicly advocated the annexation of Canada as a compensation for any loss which might be occasioned by the disaffection of the South. The people calculate here (I am afraid not without reason) upon being effectively aided in an inroad upon Canada by the Irish Secret Societies which have been formed especially in the State of New York nominally for the purpose of invading Ireland.

I can hardly hope that you will not think the antecedent improbability of this country's rushing to its ruin by adding Foreign to Civil war so great as to prove that I must be led away by visionary apprehensions. However this may be, it may be convenient to you to know what my knowledge of men and things here has brought me to believe and what I have in consequence written home.

Our Government has taken the only position sanctioned by International law and by precedent. It observes absolute neutrality and impartiality between the contending parties, recognizing, as it is bound to do, both as invested with belligerent rights. No other course was open to it, except that of an offensive alliance with one side against the other. The North have certainly not asked for such an alliance and would doubtless reject an offer of it with disdain. And yet they choose to be in a fury because we do not try to occupy some untenable position as their partisans.

No one defines our position more clearly than their own great authority Wheaton.[39]

[39] Henry Wheaton (November 27, 1785 – March 11, 1848) was an American lawyer, jurist and diplomat. He was the third reporter of decisions for the United States Supreme Court, the first U.S. minister to Denmark, and the second U.S. minister to Prussia. From 1812 to 1815, he edited *National Advocate*, the organ of the administration party. There he published notable articles on the question of neutral rights in connection with the then-existing war with England.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, May 21, 1861.

> One of the great difficulties I have to contend with in my endeavour to keep this Government within such bounds as may render the maintenance of peace possible is the persuasion which prevails even with sensible men that *no* outrage will compel England to make war with the North. Such men, although seeing the inexpediency and impropriety of Mr. Seward's treatment of the European Powers, still do not think it worth while to risk their own mob popularity by declaring against it. If they thought there was really any danger they would no doubt do a great deal to avert it.
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> Of these men the most distinguished is Mr. Sumner.[40] He has considerable influence in Foreign Questions and holds the important office of Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. He is in correspondence with many people in England, and I believe with the Duke and Duchess of Argyll.[41] I think no greater service could be rendered to the cause of peace than to make Mr. Sumner aware of the real perils to which Mr. Seward and the Cabinet are exposing the country. If some means cannot be devised of checking them, they will carry not only arrogance but practical vexations to a pitch which will render the maintenance of peace impossible. If Mr. Sumner's correspondence from England convinced him that there was real danger in Mr. Seward's proceedings, he might do a good deal to put a stop to them. I think I have done something to shake his confidence, but I believe he still relies to a great degree upon assurances he received from England under circumstances wholly different from those which now so unhappily exist.

Only a few years earlier, a British Minister, Sir John Crampton[42] (like Lord Sackville,[43] in 1888), had been offered as a sacrifice to the Irish vote, and received his passport, and it began to look as if this spirited action might be repeated.

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[40] Charles Sumner (January 6, 1811 – March 11, 1874) was an American lawyer and statesman who represented Massachusetts in the United States Senate from 1851 until his death in 1874. Before and during the American Civil War, he was a leading American advocate for the abolition of slavery. He chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1861 to 1871, until he lost the position following a dispute with President Ulysses S. Grant over the attempted annexation of Santo Domingo.

[41] George John Douglas Campbell, 8th and 1st Duke of Argyll (30 April 1823 – 24 April 1900; styled Marquess of Lorne until 1847), was a Scottish polymath and Liberal statesman. His literary output was extensive writing on topics varying from science and theology to economy and politics. In addition to this, he served prominently in the administrations of Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, John Russell and William Gladstone. The title was created initially in the peerage of Scotland in 1701 and in the peerage of the United Kingdom in 1892.

[42] Sir John Fiennes Twisleton Crampton, 2nd Baronet, KCB (1805 – 7 December 1886) was a British diplomat, minister to the United States from 1852 to 1856 and Minister to Russia from 1858 to 1860.

[43] Lionel Sackville-West, 2nd Baron Sackville, GCMG (19 July 1827 – 3 September 1908), was a British diplomat. Sackville-West was Minister Plenipotentiary to Argentina from 1872 to 1878 and Ambassador to Spain from 1878 to 1881. Then, he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, a post he held until 1888, when he was declared *persona non grata* for writing of the Murchison letter.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, June 4, 1861.

> The present game of the violent party appears to be to discover or invent some shade of difference in the conduct of England and France in order to use violent language, or even to take violent measures against England without necessarily involving themselves in a quarrel with France also. The plan most in vogue at this moment seems to be to send me my passport. After their experience in the case of Sir J. Crampton they look upon this as a measure which would gain them most applause by its appearance of vigour without exposing them to any real danger. They have not yet hit upon any fault to find with me personally, except that I *must* have written unfriendly despatches to my government, because my government has taken a course which they do not like. The whole is no doubt an attempt to carry a point by bluster which will perhaps fail if it be encountered with mild language and very firm conduct. For my own part I conceive my best line will be to avoid giving any possible reason for complaint against myself personally and to keep things as smooth as I can. If H.M. Government concede nothing to violent language it will *probably* subside, but there is such a dementia in some of the people here that we must not be surprised at any act of violence they may commit.
>
> Mr. Seward will be furious when he finds that his adherence to the Declaration of Paris will not stop the Southern privateering. This is one of the difficulties of making the proposals respecting maritime law. But the great trouble will be the fuss which the Southern government will make about receiving a communication from England and France. It will be a great advantage to have a discreet and able man like Mr. Bunch[44] to employ in the South. I trust it may be possible to grant him some compensation for the risk and loss to which he is exposed by remaining there.

Another long letter of June 10th illustrates the tension of the situation, and again urges the necessity of attending to the defence of Canada.

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Lord Lyons to Lord John Russell.
Washington, June 10, 1861.

> I owe you more than common thanks for your private letter of the 25th.
>
> Mr. Adams' Report of his first conversation with you appears to have produced a good impression on the Cabinet. This I learn from Mr. Chase,[45] the Secretary of the Treasury,

[44] Robert Bunch KCMG (born September 11, 1820, died March 21, 1881) was a British diplomat, who was a secret agent present in the United States South during the American Civil War. Robert Bunch was vice-consul in New York City from October 25, 1848, to 1853. From 1853 to 1864, Bunch was consul in Charleston, South Carolina.

[45] Salmon Portland Chase (January 13, 1808 – May 7, 1873) was an American politician and jurist who served as the sixth chief justice of the United States from 1864 to his death in 1873. Chase served as the

who dined with me the day before yesterday. I have not seen Mr. Seward since they arrived. It is too dangerous to talk to him on such subjects for me to bring them up unnecessarily.

I hope we may see some moderation in the tone of the Newspapers. The people in the North are beginning to be aware of the immense encouragement which their predictions of a war with England have given to their Southern Foe. I understand that the effect at Richmond of the repeated assertions in the Northern Papers of the hostility of England to the North has been prodigious.

I have written so much officially on the risk of a sudden Declaration of War against England by the U.S. that I have nothing to add on that subject. That such an act of madness is so far from impossible, that we ought to be prepared for it at any moment, I am thoroughly convinced. I am doing all I can to avoid awkward questions—for to give way upon any such question would be still more dangerous to peace than to make a firm stand. The safe course therefore is to prevent questions arising, if possible. But the first thing to be done towards obtaining anything like permanent security is to remove the temptation to attack Canada.

I am a little nervous about our Company of Marines at San Juan. I don't know that I can suggest any precautions to Governor Douglas which would not be more likely to do harm than good. I have besides no means of sending him a letter, which would not be liable to be read on the way. I can

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communicate with the Admiral in the Pacific in cypher, but I do not know where he may be. Under any circumstances the Government here would of course be able to send intelligence of war having broken out to the Pacific sooner than I could.

M. Mercier, the French Minister here, appears to be very frank and cordial with me. The instructions which he read to me insist very strongly upon his acting in entire concert with me. I think he may perhaps have received a confidential Despatch desiring him to proceed cautiously, for he is going at a much slower pace than his language a short time ago would have led one to expect. His giving Mr. Seward a copy of the Exposition of the French Jurists on the question of Belligerent Rights, as he did before of M. Thouvenel's[46] account of his conversation with Mr. Sanford,[47] seems to show a straightforward desire to make this Government acquainted with the real sentiments and intentions of the Emperor. The language M. Mercier uses to me and to his other Colleagues, as well as that which he uses to Americans in my presence, is in direct contradiction to the reports that France will assist the North, which are so assiduously repeated and commented upon in the American

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25th United States secretary of the treasury from 1861 to 1864, funding the American Civil War during the administration of Abraham Lincoln.

[46] Édouard Antoine de Thouvenel (11 November 1818, Verdun, Meuse – 18 October 1866) was ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1855 to 1860, and French Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1860 to 1862.

[47] This may be Henry Shelton Sanford (June 15, 1823 – May 21, 1891) an American diplomat and businessman from Connecticut who served as United States Minister to Belgium from 1861 to 1869.

Newspapers. I am very willing to let him take the lead in our communications about the Declaration of Paris. It would be playing the game of the enemies to peace with England for me to go faster in these matters than the French Minister.

Among other difficulties in the way of making your communication to the Southern Consuls, is that of getting it safely to them. All regular communication with the South is cut off. I suppose the Government here would give either M. Mercier or me a Pass for a special Messenger if we asked for one—but it may be desirable to afford as little evidence as possible of our being connected with the communication. The Southern Government will no doubt do all in their power to give importance and publicity to the communication. This Government will very probably withdraw the Exequaturs of the Consuls who make it. The withdrawal would not be altogether free from inconvenience to us, as it would interfere with the Consuls' holding intercourse with the

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Blockading Squadrons, which it is sometimes of importance that they should be able to do.

I think the English and French Governments will find it necessary to make the Cabinet of Washington clearly understand that they *must* and *will* hold unofficial communication with the Southern Government on matters concerning the interests of their subjects. The announcement should if possible be made *collectively*, and in such a form as to preclude the Cabinet's pretending to find a difference between the conduct of France and England. The Government of the U.S. can perform none of the duties of a Government towards Foreigners in the Seceded States; and it is a preposterous pretension to insist upon excluding Foreign Governments from intercourse with the authorities however illegitimate, to whom their Subjects must in fact look for protection.

The inactivity of the Troops on both sides would be satisfactory, if one could hope that there was still any chance of the question being solved without any serious fighting. As it is, one would be glad that something should be done as soon as possible to enable an opinion to be formed on the relative strength and spirit of the Armies. I believe that the real secret is that from want of training in the men, and total lack of waggons, horses and other means of transport, neither Government can move troops in any considerable numbers except by railroad. I can see as yet no signs of the spirit of conquest in the North flagging, or of the South losing courage. The Financial Difficulty will be the great one on both sides. The Southern men are said to serve without pay—but this Government has fixed the pay of the volunteers and militiamen at the same rate as that of the regular army, eleven dollars (about 45 shillings) a month, for a private, in addition to clothes and rations.

I must do the little I can to influence the Senators and Representatives when they come up next month; but there is only too much reason to fear that fierceness against England will be popular, and that the Legislators will vie with each other in manifesting it. What I think they are most likely to do is to give the President authority to declare war with us, without waiting for the sanction of Congress.

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> Since I wrote what precedes, I have been informed privately that in Mr. Dayton's[48] Report of his audience of the Emperor, there is a rather ambiguous phrase put into the Emperor's mouth, respecting His Majesty's desire to contribute to put an end to the dispute between North and South. My informant says that the President and Mr. Seward *really* interpret the phrase as signifying that the Emperor would be willing to assist the North to subdue the South—and that it is from this supposition that Mr. Seward does not send M. Mercier back the "Exposition" and enter into the discussion about neutral Rights. Mr. Seward is naturally puzzled by the apparent discrepancy between the Emperor's language and that of His Majesty's Minister here. The men in the State Department who are accustomed to business look, it seems, upon the Emperor's words, even as reported by Mr. Dayton, as no more than a vague assurance of goodwill, pointing to mediation rather than to anything else. I will endeavour to get M. Mercier to set the President and Mr. Seward right as soon as possible, for the delusion is a very dangerous one for England, and a much more dangerous one for the U.S.

The ill-feeling towards England continued to grow worse as time went on, and apparently was due largely to sentiment. The success of the South in founding a practically independent government was so galling to the North that anything which implied the admission of a self-evident fact, such as the recognition of the Southern States as belligerents, was inexpressibly galling. Fortunately, England and France were acting in unison, and even Mr. Seward's ingenuity was unable to show that there was any difference between the attitude of the two countries. Writing on June 24, Lord Lyons reported that he had discovered that Mr. Seward had prepared a

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despatch which was all but a direct announcement of war, and that it was only the intervention of the President and of the more reasonable members of the Cabinet which prevented its being sent to the American Minister in London. The great qualities of President Lincoln, by the way, do not appear to have been recognized at this early period, for competent judges pronounced that although well-meaning and conscientious, he gave no proof of possessing any natural talents to compensate for his ignorance of everything but Illinois village politics.

Towards the end of July the military inactivity, due to causes mentioned earlier, came to an end, and the historic fight of Bull's[49] Run took place on the 21st .

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[48] William Lewis Dayton (February 17, 1807 – December 1, 1864) was an American politician, active first in the Whig Party and later in the Republican Party. During the American Civil War, Dayton served as the United States Ambassador to France, a position in which he worked to prevent French recognition of the Confederate States of America.

[49] The First Battle of Bull Run was the first major battle of the American Civil War. It was fought on July 21, 1861, in Prince William County, Virginia about thirty miles west-southwest of Washington, D.C. The Union Army was slow in positioning itself, allowing Confederate reinforcements time to arrive by rail. Each side had about 18,000 poorly trained and poorly led troops. The battle was a Confederate victory and was followed by a disorganized post-battle retreat of the Union forces.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell
Washington, July 22, 1861.

It is too soon to form any speculations on the result of the defeat of yesterday. Neither General Scott nor the Government had calculated on the possibility of anything like it, and as for the people of the North, they talked at all events as if the victory was already theirs. If the North have anything like the spirit to which they lay claim, they will rise with more resolution than ever to avenge the defeat. The test will be the conduct of the Militia Regiments. The three months' term of service of most of them has just expired: some had gone home and the rest were on the point of following—leaving the war to be carried on by the Volunteers and the Regular Army. If the Militia regiments remain and others come up, we may conclude that the warlike spirit of the North is unbroken. If they do not, there may be a chance of peace. For this battle will not facilitate recruiting for the army and the Volunteers—and unless the Capitalists are urged by patriotism or squeezed by mob pressure, the loans will fail and the money to pay the Volunteers will not be forthcoming.

I am myself inclined to hope that Congress may show some dignity and good sense. The general

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opinion is that it will be violent and childish—vote men and money on paper by millions--slay its Southern enemies by treason bills—and ruin them by confiscation acts—decree the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery in the Southern States—the closing of the Ports, and what not.

Amongst other results of Bull's Run was the production of the following minute by Lord Palmerston.[50] If his judgment on the temper of the North was completely wrong, his other observations might be profitably studied by the numerous persons in this country who hold the view that efficient military forces can be improvised whenever an emergency arises.

MINUTE OF LORD PALMERSTON.
Aug. 15, 1861.

The defeat at Bull's Run or rather at Yankee's Run proves two things. First, that to bring together many thousand men and put uniforms upon their backs and muskets in their hands is not to make an army: discipline, experienced officers and confidence in the steadiness of their comrades are necessary to make an army fight and stand: secondly, that the Unionist cause is not in the hearts of the mass of the population of the North. The Americans are not cowards: individually they are as reckless of their own lives as of the lives of others: and it is not easy to believe that if they had felt they were fighting for a great national interest they would have run away as they did from the battle, or that whole regiments would have quietly marched away home just before the fight was to begin. The

[50] Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (20 October 1784 – 18 October 1865), known as Lord Palmerston, was a British statesman and politician who served as prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1855 to 1858 and from 1859 to his death in 1865. He dominated British foreign policy from 1830 to 1865 when Britain stood at the height of its imperial power.

> Truth is, the North are fighting for an Idea chiefly entertained by professional politicians, while the South are fighting for what they consider rightly or wrongly vital interests.

The defects and weaknesses disclosed by this defeat produced much contemptuous criticism upon the military inefficiency of the United States. In reality there was no cause for surprise. In April, 1861, the entire regular army of the United States only amounted to 16,000 officers and men. Many of the officers had taken sides with

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the South. Not one of them had ever had the opportunity of commanding any considerable number of troops, and public opinion was so entirely uninstructed concerning military questions that every local politician considered himself competent to become a colonel, or even a general. But what Bull's Run showed more conclusively than anything else, was that the task of subjugating the South was infinitely greater than had been anticipated, and that the confident boastings of enthusiastic Northerners were as foolish as they were unjustified. We, however, as a nation, had not then, and have now, little cause to jeer at the Americans for their failure: we had embarked, only a few years earlier, upon the Crimean Campaign almost equally unprepared for a serious struggle, and less than forty years later, in 1899, one of our most eminent military authorities undertook to finish off the Boers before the date of the Lord Mayor's Banquet.

About this time Anglo-American relations showed a slight improvement, although Mr. Seward, in a characteristic outburst, took occasion to point out that "the policy of Foreign Governments was founded upon considerations of interest and of commerce, while that of the United States was based on high and eternal considerations of principle and the good of the human race; that the policy of foreign nations was regulated by the government which ruled them, while that of the United States was directed by the unanimous and unchangeable will of the people." Yet he had clearly become more peaceable, and this welcome tendency was perhaps due to the British Government having increased the Canadian garrisons in response to the urgent pressure of Lord Lyons and the Canadian authorities.

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Lord Lyons to Sir E. Head.
Washington, Aug. 2, 1861.

> The intentions of the Government are at this moment more peaceful than they have been. But I do not yet see any reason to modify the views I expressed in my previous confidential letters. The present change has been mainly produced by our preparations for defence and by the quiet firmness with which we have maintained the position we took up with regard to Belligerent Rights. I think it as necessary as ever to complete our preparations for defence, and I find that the knowledge that we are making such preparations calms instead of irritating this people.
>
> There is nothing very surprising in raw levies being seized with such a panic as that which led to the flight from Bull's Run. The want of spirit before and since shown by the Militia regiments is a worse sign. Two went away, on their term expiring, one may say from the battlefield itself. The defeat, and even the danger of Washington being taken, have been

unable to induce any whose time is up to remain. The Government considers that we are now safe again from an attack here, but for some days our reliance was only upon its not entering into the enemy's plan to come here.

As day after day passes without an onward movement of the Southern troops, the war spirit seems to revive in the North. But it will require a decided Northern victory to bring back the enthusiasm and the unanimity which appeared on the fall of Fort Sumter. A peace party is beginning to show itself timidly and weakly, but much more openly than it would have dared to do two months ago.

We have nearly got through another Tariff Bill without a serious attack upon the Reciprocity Treaty, thanks more to the haste, I am afraid, than the good will of the Legislators. It will be a wonderful tariff, whichever of the plans now before Congress is adopted.

Mr. Seward some weeks ago took credit to himself for having recalled Mr. Ashman[51] on finding that his mission was ill looked on. This gave me a good opportunity of telling him that H.M.

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Government considered that they had a good right to complain of his having been sent at all without proper communication being previously made to them and to me.

I have applied for the discharge of the two minors about whom you wrote to me officially. I am not sure of getting it. My applications for discharge from the Army and Navy have become necessarily so numerous that they are not viewed with favour.

Such elaborate pains had been taken to prevent anything in the least likely to irritate the Government of the United States, that it was all the more annoying when an incident occurred which gave excuse for complaint.

The Consuls in the Southern States were permitted to send their despatches in Foreign Office bags through the lines on the reasonable condition that no advantage was to be taken of the privilege in order to provide information which might be of use to the enemies of the United States Government. The rule was rigidly observed at the Legation, and the Consuls had been repeatedly warned not to infringe it in any way; but in an evil hour, Mr. Bunch, the British Consul at Charleston, a capable and industrious official, committed his bag to a friend, who, unknown to the Consul, also took charge of about two hundred private letters. The messenger was arrested by the United States authorities, and imprisoned. The letters, of course, were seized, but so also was the Foreign Office bag, addressed to Lord Russell, and a Foreign Office bag has always been considered as one of the most sacred objects upon earth. The United States Government, professing that a most serious offence had been committed, and taking advantage of an error in the passport of the messenger, sent the bag

[51] No record of this man has been located.

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over to London by special messenger, and demanded the recall of the unfortunate Consul Bunch. The opportunity, in short, was too good to be lost. When the bag was eventually opened, in Downing Street, it was found to contain nothing but despatches and a few letters from British governesses and servants who had been permitted to make use of it in consequence of the discontinuance of the post. In fact, it was an essentially trivial matter, but the tension between the two countries was so great that Lord Russell thought that it might possibly lead to a rupture of official relations, and sent the following instructions:--

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
Abergeldie Castle, Sept. 13, 1861.

> It is not very probable, but it is possible that the complaint against Bunch may be a preliminary to the breaking off of official intercourse between the two countries.
>
> Your name has been kept out of the correspondence on both sides, but if the Envoys are to be withdrawn, you will be sent away from Washington.
>
> In that case I wish you to express in the most dignified and guarded terms that the course taken by the Washington Government must be the result of a misconception on their part, and that you shall retire to Canada in the persuasion that the misunderstanding will soon cease, and the former friendly relations be restored.
>
> It is very desirable to obtain an explanation from Consul Bunch, and you may authorize Admiral Milne, after due notice, to Mr. Seward, to send a gunboat to Charleston for the purpose.

Consul Bunch, in spite of his troubles, remained for over a year in Charleston after this incident. Eventually the

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American Government revoked his exequatur, and he made a semi-state return to England in a man-of-war.

In the late autumn, Mr. Seward began to show signs of returning to his earlier manner, and it was plain enough that he had only been seeking to gain time by his moderation. He now maintained that any communication between a Foreign Government and the Confederate Government was an offence against the United States, and it became more and more necessary for England and France to come to some distinct agreement as to what the nature and extent of those communications should be. Mr. Seward's contention was obviously absurd. South Carolina had seceded nearly a year previously. State after State had followed its example; the United States Government had not made the slightest progress in restoring its authority, and exercised no power or influence in any portion of the new Confederation. On the other hand, there was a *de facto* government in that Confederation which was obeyed without question and exercised the functions of government with perfect regularity. It was clear that a government which was without the means of protecting British subjects had no right to prevent us from holding necessary and informal communications

with the only power to which British subjects could look for protection and redress of grievances. Cases of British subjects being compulsorily enlisted, of British goods being seized on board vessels captured by Southern privateers, and instances of a similar nature were of constant occurrence. It was preposterous that under these conditions British Consuls should be expected to refrain from communication with the Confederate authorities. Fortunately, although the

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British interests involved were infinitely the more important, French interests were affected too, and upon this, as upon most other difficult questions, Lord Lyons received the hearty and loyal support of his French colleague, M. Mercier.

On November 8, an incident of the gravest nature occurred, which seemed likely to render futile all the laborious efforts which had been made to keep the peace between England and the United States.

The English mail steamer *Trent*, one day out from Havannah, was met by the American warship *San Jacinto* and stopped by a shell fired across her bows. She was then boarded by a party of marines, and the officer in command of the party demanded a list of the passengers. The production of the list having been refused, the officer stated that he knew the Confederate delegates to Europe, Messrs. Mason[52] and Slidell,[53] to be on board, and insisted upon their surrender. Whilst the discussion was in progress, Mr. Slidell made his appearance and disclosed his identity. Thereupon, in defiance of the protests of the captain of the *Trent* and of the Government mail agent, Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason, together with their secretaries, were seized and carried off by force to the *San Jacinto*, and taken as prisoners to New York.

The news arrived in England on November 27, and, naturally, caused the greatest excitement and indignation. It was felt that the limits of concession had been reached, that a stand must now be made if we ever intended to maintain our national rights, and, as a proof that they were in earnest, the Government decided upon the immediate despatch of 8,000 men to Canada.

The first private letter from Lord Lyons was written on November 19.

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[52] James Murray Mason (November 3, 1798 – April 28, 1871) was an American lawyer and politician who became a Confederate diplomat. He served as U.S. Senator from Virginia for fourteen years, having previously represented Virginia's 15th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Frederick County in the Virginia House of Delegates. As chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations from 1851 until his expulsion in 1861 for supporting the Confederate States of America, Mason took great interest in protecting American cotton exporters. As the Confederacy's leading diplomat, he traveled to Europe seeking support, but proved unable to get the United Kingdom to recognize the Confederacy as a country.

[53] John Slidell (1793 – July 9, 1871) was an American politician, lawyer, slaveholder, and businessman. A native of New York, Slidell moved to Louisiana as a young man. He was a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. He was one of the two Confederate diplomats captured by the United States Navy from the British ship RMS *Trent* in 1861 and later released.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 19, 1861.

> I have written so much officially on this unfortunate affair of Mason and Slidell that I have hardly left myself time to thank you for your kind private letter of the 2nd.
>
> I am told confidently that orders were given at Washington which led to the capture on board the *Trent*, and that they were signed by Mr. Seward without the knowledge of the President. I do not vouch for the truth of this. I am afraid he is not sorry to have a question with us like this, in which it is difficult for France to take a part.

Lord Lyons had made up his mind from the first that, as it was impossible for him to form a correct opinion as to what had actually occurred, the only thing to do was to maintain an attitude of complete reserve. In the absence of authentic information, he felt that on the one hand it would be unsafe to ask for a reparation which might be inadequate; on the other hand he was reluctant to make a demand which might be unnecessarily great. Consequently, he resolved to take no steps until he received instructions from home, refused to say a word on the subject either officially or unofficially, and instructed the Consuls to maintain silence.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 22, 1861.

> I have all along been expecting some such blow as the capture on board the *Trent*. Turn out how it may, it must I fear produce an effect on public opinion in both countries which will go far to disconcert all my peaceful plans and hopes. I am so worn out with the never-ending labour of keeping things smooth, under the discouragement of the doubt whether by so doing I am not after all only leading these people to believe that they may go all lengths with us with impunity that I am

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> sometimes half tempted to wish that the worst may have come already. However I do not allow this feeling to influence my conduct, and I have done nothing which can in the least interfere with any course which you may take concerning the affair of the *Trent*.
>
> If the effect on the people and Government of this country were the only thing to be considered, it would be a case for an extreme measure one way or the other. If the capture be unjustifiable we should ask for the immediate release of the prisoners, promptly, imperatively, with a determination to act at once, if the demand were refused. If, on the other hand, the capture be justifiable, we should at once say so and declare that we have no complaint to make on the subject. Even so, we should not escape the evil of encouraging the Americans in the belief that we shall bear anything from them. For they have made up their minds that they have insulted us, although the fear of the consequences prevents their giving vent to their exultation. They would not however consider it so manifest a proof of yielding on our part if we at once declared that we had nothing to complain of, as if we did complain without obtaining full reparation. Of course, however, I am well aware that

public opinion in this country is not the only thing to be thought of in this question. While maintaining entire reserve on the question itself, I have avoided any demonstration of ill-humour. My object has been, on the one hand, not to prevent the Government being led by its present apprehensions to take some conciliatory step, and on the other hand not to put H.M. Government or myself in an awkward position, if it should after all appear that we should not be right to make the affair a serious ground of complaint.

Congress will meet on December 2nd, which will not diminish the difficulty of managing matters here. It is supposed that General McClellan[54] will be obliged to attempt some forward movement, in order that he and the Government may be able to meet the fiery legislators. They hoped the Beaufort affair[55] would have been sufficient, but like all they do, the effect is so much weakened,

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first by the preposterous boastings beforehand, and secondly by the fabulous accounts of the success first given, that something new must if possible be provided.

The Finances are kept in an apparently prosperous condition, by postponing all but the most pressing payments. In this manner the New York Banks are not pressed to pay up the sums they have taken of the Loan. The people are so enamoured of their last brilliant discovery in political economy that it was seriously intended to raise the Morrill Tariff, in order that no money might go out of the country and nothing be imported but "gold and silver to carry on the war with." The Cabinet has now however, I understand, determined to recommend that the Morrill Tariff be not touched. One cannot help hoping that some one may be reasonable enough to suggest the idea of a Revenue Tariff.

General McClellan's own plan is said to be to gain a great victory, and then, with or without the sanction of Congress and the President, to propose the most favourable terms to the South if it will only come back. It is a curious sign of the confusion into which things are falling, that such a plan is coolly discussed. I mean that part of it which consists in the General's acting without the consent of the President and Congress.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 25, 1861.

The people here are extremely frightened about the capture on board the *Trent*. The New York money market gives signs of this. Another indication is the moderation of the newspapers, which is for them wonderful. They have put in more correct accounts of my language (or rather silence). I rather suspect that this must have been done on a hint from Mr. Seward. As a general rule I abstain from noticing anything the newspapers say about

[54] George Brinton McClellan (December 3, 1826 – October 29, 1885) was an American military officer, politician and engineer who served as the 24th governor of New Jersey from 1878 to 1881 and as Commanding General of the United States Army from November 1861 to March 1862.

[55] The attack on Beaufort and subsequent occupation of the city in November 1861 made it one of the first communities in the Deep South to be held in Union hands. Though much of the town was spared from physical destruction, there were many incidents of arson and looting.

> me. On this occasion in particular contradiction from me would have been almost as dangerous as affirmation, so I left the assertions to take their chance.

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> The Consuls in the South do not behave well about forwarding private letters. There is a fresh case which I report to-day. Mr. Seward has, I think, behaved properly about it. I am afraid I shall be obliged to ask you to support me by some severe act, if my last instruction is not obeyed.
>
> I write, as indeed I act, as if our relations with this Government were to be unchanged. Let the affair of the capture on board the *Trent* turn out how it may, I am not confident that I shall long be able to do so.

Writing on the same date to Admiral Milne, he repeats that nothing whatever has passed between him and the U.S. Government on the subject of the *Trent*, and adds: "I suppose I am the only man in America who has expressed no opinion whatever either on the International Law question, or on the course which our Government will take." Such reticence appears almost superhuman.

The attitude, however, of an important section of the American public was anything but reticent. Captain Wilkes[56] sprang at once into the position of a national hero. Congress passed a vote of thanks to him; he was banqueted, toasted, serenaded, and shortly became an admiral. A member of the Government, Mr. Welles,[57] Secretary of the Navy, noted for his hostility to England, distinguished himself by officially congratulating Captain Wilkes upon his heroic action; intimating at the same time that the "generous forbearance" he had shown in not capturing the *Trent* could not be treated as a precedent in subsequent cases of the infraction of neutral obligations. The Governor of Boston also distinguished himself by the following statement at a public banquet: "That there may be nothing left to crown this exaltation, Commodore Wilkes fired his shot across the bows of the ship that bore

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the British lion at its head," while many other prominent citizens followed his example.

[56] Charles Wilkes (April 3, 1798 – February 8, 1877) was an American naval officer, ship's captain, and explorer. He led the United States Exploring Expedition (1838–1842). During the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865, he commanded USS *San Jacinto* during the *Trent* Affair in which he stopped a Royal Mail ship and removed two Confederate diplomats, which almost led to war between the United States and the United Kingdom.

[57] Gideon Welles (July 1, 1802 – February 11, 1878) was an American government official who was the United States Secretary of the Navy from 1861 to 1869, a cabinet post he was awarded after supporting Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election. Although opposed to the Union blockade of Southern ports, he duly carried out his part of the Anaconda Plan, largely sealing off the Confederate coastline and preventing the exchange of cotton for war supplies. This is viewed as a major cause of Union victory in the Civil War, and his achievement in expanding the Navy almost tenfold was widely praised.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 29, 1861.

> The Consuls in the South are crying out for ships again. This is the solution for every difficulty in the Consular mind, as my experience in the Mediterranean taught me long ago; though what the ships were to do, except fire a salute in honour of the Consul, I could never discover. I had some trouble, as you may perhaps recollect, in checking the Consular ardour to send ships up the Potomac to my own relief last spring. Sir A. Milne objects strongly to sending ships to the Southern Ports, unless with a specific object and definite instructions, and I think he is quite right. It is quite true that a town *may* be bombarded some day by the United States forces: that British subjects may have their throats cut by the negroes in a servile insurrection, or be tarred and feathered by a Vigilance Committee. But we cannot keep a squadron at every point to protect them, and I do not know what points are particularly threatened.
>
> I shall do all in my power to keep things smooth until I receive your orders about the *Trent* affair. This can in any event do no harm. There is a story here that, in a recent hypothetical case, the Law Officers of the Crown decided in favour of the right of the United States to take Mason and Slidell out of a British ship or postal packet. I do not know whether Mr. Adams has written this to Mr. Seward, but I am inclined to think that the Government believe it to be true.

The uncertainty as to the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown rendered it all the more necessary to keep quiet and wait for orders, and the situation was rendered a little easier on account of there being no mention of the *Trent* in the Presidential Message. Mr. Galt,[58] the Canadian Finance Minister, happened to be in Washington

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at the beginning of December, and had an interesting conversation with President Lincoln, who disclaimed for himself and the Cabinet all thought of aggression against Canada. The President also stated that he himself had been opposed to Mr. Seward's circular putting the coasts into a state of defence, but had been overruled. On being asked what the recommendation to make fortifications and depots of arms on the Great Lakes meant, he only said, "We must say something to satisfy the people." About the Mason and Slidell case, he remarked, "Oh, that'll be got along with!" He further volunteered the observation that if he could not within a reasonable period get hold of Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, and keep Maryland, he should tell the American people to give up the contest, for it would be "too big" for them.

The impression produced upon Mr. Galt was that President Lincoln himself was honest and sincere in what he said, but that he was very far from being master of his Cabinet. Mr. Galt returned to

[58] Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, PC GCMG CB (September 6, 1817 – September 19, 1893) was a politician and Father of Confederation, the union of British North American colonies into Canada. He was very influential in persuading the British Government to make Canada the first Dominion.

Canada, bearing a letter to Lord Monck,[59] the new Governor-General, urging the necessity of preparing for defence, and also an ingenious arrangement for warning the Canadian Government in case of emergency, without having recourse to cypher telegrams, which might arouse the suspicions of the Americans.

On December 13, intelligence was received in America of the arrival in England of the first news of the capture of Mason and Slidell, the submarine cable, of course, not being at that time in operation. A great fall in all securities immediately took place.

At midnight on the 18th, the Queen's messenger bearing the fateful despatches from Lord Russell arrived at the

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British Legation at Washington.

The principal despatch, dated November 30, 1861, had been drawn up after consideration by the Cabinet, and the purport of it was that the United States Government were informed that International Law and the rights of Great Britain had been violated, that H.M. Government trusted that the act would be disavowed, the prisoners set free and restored to British protection. Should this demand be refused, Lord Lyons was instructed to leave Washington.

The draft of this despatch was submitted to the Queen, and, in the opinion of the Prince Consort,[60] the wording was of somewhat too peremptory a character. The suggestions of the Prince Consort were embodied in a memorandum quoted by Sir Theodore Martin[61] in his book, and the object of them was to remove any expressions in the despatch which might unduly affront a sensitive nation, and at the same time enable it to retreat from a false position without loss of credit or dignity. The Prince was suffering from a mortal illness at the time, and was dead within a fortnight; it was the last occasion upon which he took any part in public affairs, but never, probably, did he render a greater service to the country of his adoption than when he persuaded the Cabinet to modify the wording of this momentous despatch. As amended in accordance with the Prince Consort's suggestions, the crucial passages ran as follows:--

> Her Majesty's Government, bearing in mind the friendly relations which have long subsisted between Great Britain and the United States, are willing to believe that the United States's naval officer who committed this aggression was not acting in compliance with

[59] Charles Stanley Monck, 4th Viscount Monck GCMG PC (10 October 1819 – 29 November 1894) was a British politician who served as the last governor-general of the Province of Canada and the first Governor General of Canada after Canadian Confederation.
[60] Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (Franz August Karl Albert Emanuel; 26 August 1819 – 14 December 1861) was the husband of Queen Victoria. As such, he was consort of the British monarch from their marriage on 10 February 1840 until his death in 1861. Victoria granted him the title Prince Consort in 1857.
[61] Sir Theodore Martin KCB KCVO (16 September 1816 – 18 August 1909) was a Scottish poet, biographer, and translator. He wrote *Life of the Prince Consort* (1874–80), a task entrusted to him by Queen Victoria. It was a work which won him her lifelong friendship.

any authority from his Government, or that if he conceived himself to be so authorized, he greatly misunderstood the instructions which he had received.

For the Government of the United States must be fully aware that the British Government could not

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allow such an affront to the national honour to pass without full reparation, and Her Majesty's Government are unwilling to believe that it could be the deliberate intention of the Government of the United States unnecessarily to force into discussion between the two Governments a question of so grave a character, and with regard to which the whole British nation would be sure to entertain such unanimity of feeling.

Her Majesty's Government, therefore, trust that when this matter shall have been brought under the consideration of the Government of the United States, that Government will, of its own accord, offer to the British Government such redress as alone would satisfy the British nation, namely, the liberation of the four gentlemen, and their delivery to your Lordship, in order that they may again be placed under British protection, and a suitable apology for the aggression which has been committed.

Should these terms not be offered by Mr. Seward, you will propose them to him.

It will be observed that in the above there is nothing of an aggressive or minatory nature, but in a further despatch of the same date, Lord Lyons was instructed to allow Mr. Seward a delay of seven days, if the latter asked for it. If at the end of seven days no answer was returned, or any answer which was not a compliance with the demands of Her Majesty's Government, then the British Minister was directed to leave Washington with all the members of his staff and the archives, and to repair forthwith to London.
Accompanying the despatches was a private letter from Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons
Pembroke Lodge, Dec. 1, 1861.

The despatches which were agreed to at the Cabinet yesterday and which I have signed this morning impose upon you a disagreeable task.

My wish would be that at your first interview with Mr. Seward you should not take my despatch with you, but should prepare him for it, and ask him to settle with the President and his Cabinet what course they would propose.

The next time you should bring my despatch and read it to him fully.

If he asks you what will be the consequence of his refusing compliance I think you should say that

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> you wish to leave him and the President quite free to take their own course, and that you desire to abstain from anything like menace. I think the disposition of the Cabinet is to accept the liberation of the captive commissioners and to be rather easy about the apology: that is to say if the Commissioners are delivered to you and allowed to embark in a packet for England, and an apology or explanation is sent through Mr. Adams that might be taken as a substantial compliance. But if the Commissioners are not liberated, no apology will suffice.
>
> M. Thouvenel promises to send off a despatch on Thursday next giving our cause moral support, so that you may as well keep the despatch itself a day or two before you produce it, provided you ask at once for an interview with Seward.
>
> The feeling here is very quiet but very decided. There is no party about it: all are unanimous.
>
> The best thing would be if Seward could be turned out, and a rational man put in his place. I hear it said that the Americans will not fight, but we must not count upon that.
>
> I have every reliance that you will discharge your task in the temper of firmness and calmness which befits a British representative.

Mr. Hammond,[62] the permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, whose judgment was in after years shown to be far from infallible, expressed the opinion that Messrs. Mason and Slidell would be immediately executed, so that there might be an answer ready whenever their release was demanded. A warship was ordered to proceed from Halifax to New York to receive the members of the Legation in case an unfavourable reply should be received from the American Government.

On December 7, Lord Russell wrote again privately to Lord Lyons.

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Lord Russell to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, Dec. 7, 1861.

> I have been going over in my mind the possible evasive answers of Mr. Seward, falling short of substantial compliance with our demands, in order to give you some contingent instructions.
>
> But the result is that I fear I should embarrass you more by such a course, than by leaving you to the exercise of your own excellent judgment.
>
> What we want is a plain Yes, or a plain No to our very simple demands, and we want that plain Yes or No within seven days of the communication of the despatch.

[62] Edmund Hammond, 1st Baron Hammond PC (25 June 1802 – 29 April 1890), was a British diplomat and civil servant. He was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1854 to 1873.

> The devices for avoiding the plain course are endless, and the ingenuity of American lawyers will seek perhaps to entangle you in endless arguments on Vattel, Wheaton and Scott.[63]
>
> Here are two plain answers. If the *Trent* had been brought into Boston harbour, the Prize Court must have condemned the captors to pay costs for illegal detention. This, at least, is our opinion.
>
> But Captain Wilkes superseded the authority of the Courts instituted and recognized by the Law of Nations. Seeing that there was no chance that any Court of Justice, or any law could justify the capture of the four Americans, Captain Wilkes has set aside all Courts of Justice and all law, and has taken into his own hands, by virtue of his cannons and cutlasses, the solution of a question which demanded if raised at all, a regular, a solemn and a legal decision.
>
> These are the grounds therefore upon which our demands are based and upon which they should be urged.
>
> P.S.--I have just received your letter of the 22nd. If you receive the Confederate prisoners under the protection of the British flag, we shall be satisfied. But if that is not to be obtained, you will only have to obey your instructions and withdraw.

Mr. Hammond, a very unfortunate prophet, predicted that "the Americans will never give way. The humiliation

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will be too great, and after all their boastings against Europe, they will scarcely be satisfied to yield to the common reprobation with which the act has been received. We hear, too, that the President himself is most determined against concession, having rejected peremptorily General McClellan's conciliatory advice." It must be admitted, however, that if Mr. Hammond was wrong, plenty of other people shared his views on both sides of the Atlantic.

Lord Russell's despatch having arrived at Washington late at night on December 18, Lord Lyons called upon Mr. Seward on the 19th, and acquainted him with its general tenour. Mr. Seward received the communication seriously and with dignity, nor did he manifest any dissatisfaction. At the conclusion of the interview, he asked to be given the following day for consideration, and

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[63] Henry L. Scott (October 3, 1814 – January 6, 1886) was a career officer in the United States Army. A graduate of the United States Military Academy, he was the longtime aide-de-camp to his father-in-law, General Winfield Scott. He wrote a military dictionary containing a large number of definitions relating to civil and military law and government based on the works of Bouvier, De Hart, Dunlop, Guillot, Pendergast, Vattel, Wheaton and others. An 1863 reissue of a work first published in 1861, it encapsulates the state of legal knowledge as it was understood by the American military before it was confronted by the complications wrought by the Civil War and the reforms effected by Lieber's code. This was General Orders No. 100, April 24, 1863 which was the military law that governed the wartime conduct of the Union Army by defining and describing command responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity; and the military responsibilities of the Union soldier fighting in the American Civil War

also for communication with the President. He thought that on the 21st he would be able to express an opinion upon the communication, and in the meanwhile expressed his gratification at the friendly and conciliatory manner in which it had been made by the British Representative.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Dec. 19, 1861.

> Before I left Mr. Seward he said that there was one question which he would put to me "informally," but which it was most important that I should answer. Was any time fixed by my instructions within which the U.S. Government must reply? I told him that I did not like to answer the question; that what of all things I wished to avoid was the slightest appearance of a menace. He said I need not fear that; he only wished me to tell him privately and confidentially. I said that on that

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> understanding, I would tell him that the term was seven days. He then said that much time would be lost if I did not let him have a copy of your despatch "unofficially and informally"; that so much depended upon the wording of it, that it was impossible to come to a decision without reading it. I told him that the only difficulty I had about giving it to him at once officially was that the seven days would at once begin to run. He said that was very true, but I might let him have it on the understanding that no one but himself and the President should know that I had done so. I was very glad to let him have it on these terms. It will give time for the Packet (which is indeed already due) to arrive with M. Thouvenel's Despatch to M. Mercier, and in the meantime give Mr. Seward who is now on the peace side of the Cabinet time to work with the President before the affair comes before the Cabinet itself. I sent the Despatch to him in an envelope marked "Private and Confidential." Almost immediately afterwards he came here. He told me he was pleased to find that the Despatch was courteous and friendly, and not dictatorial or menacing. There was however one question more which he must ask me, without an answer to which he could not act, but at the same time he must have the answer only in strict confidence between himself and me. I had told him in confidence that I was to wait seven days for an answer on the subject of the redress we required. Supposing he was within the seven days to send me a refusal, or a proposal to discuss the question? I told him that my instructions were positive and left me no discretion. If the answer was not satisfactory, and particularly if it did not include the immediate surrender of the Prisoners, I could not accept it.
>
> I was not sorry to tell him this in the way I did. I avoided all menace which could be an obstacle to the U.S. yielding, while I did the only thing which will make them yield if they ever do, let them know that we were really in earnest.
>
> I don't think it likely they will give in, but I do not think it impossible they may do so, particularly if the next news from England brings note of warlike preparations, and determination on the part of the Government and people.

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Mr. Seward has taken up all my time, which is my excuse for this scrawl. I shall be able to write to you to-morrow.

The second interview took place on the 21st, and the following letter explains the reasons for allowing Mr. Seward an additional two days—a happy expedient, which probably contributed in great measure to the ultimate solution of the difficulty—and also graphically depicts the general uncertainty and alarm which prevailed.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Dec. 23, 1861.

I have followed, I think to the letter, in my communications with Mr. Seward on the *Trent* affair, the plan laid down in your private letter of the 1st. The packet is unfortunately so late that M. Mercier will not receive the promised instruction from M. Thouvenel until to-morrow, but I could not have again put off communicating your despatch to Mr. Seward without an appearance of vacillation which would have been fatal. No time was practically lost by my consenting to the delay from Saturday to Monday, for whether the seven days expired on Saturday next or Monday next, I should have been equally unable to announce the result to you sooner than by the packet which will sail from New York on Wednesday, the 1st January.

I feel little or no doubt that I shall have an answer of some kind before the seven days are over. What it will be depends very much upon the news which will be brought by the packet to-morrow. If it convinces the people here that it is surrender or war, without any hope of a diversion in their favour by France, our terms will perhaps be complied with. If there is any hope left that there will be only a rupture of Diplomatic Relations, or that we shall accept the mediation of France, no concession will be made. There is no doubt that both government and people are very much frightened, but still I do not think anything but the first shot will convince the bulk of the

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population that England will really go to war.

M. Mercier went of his own accord to Mr. Seward the day before yesterday and expressed strongly his own conviction that the choice lay only between a compliance with the demands of England and war. He begged Mr. Seward to dismiss all idea of assistance from France, and not to be led away by the vulgar notion that the Emperor would gladly see England embroiled with the United States in order to pursue his own plans in Europe without opposition. He said that if he could be of use, by making these sentiments known to Senators and other influential people, he was quite ready to do so. Mr. Seward asked him whether he had received special instructions from his Government on the subject. M. Mercier said no, but that he expected some immediately, and that he had no doubt whatever what they would be. Mr. Seward did not accept his offer to prepare influential men here for giving way, but merely said, "Let us wait and see what your instructions really turn out to be."

It is announced that General Scott is more than halfway across the Atlantic on his way here, I suppose in the hope of appearing again on the stage as the Grand Pacificator. If he gives the sanction of his name to a compliance with our terms he will certainly render the compliance easier to the Government and less unpalatable to the people. But I cannot foresee any circumstances, under which I should be justified in departing from your instructions. Unless I receive an announcement that the prisoners will be surrendered to *us*, and at least not a refusal to make an apology before noon on this day week, no other course will be open to me than to demand my passports and those of all the members of the Legation and go away at once. In case of a non-compliance, or of the time elapsing without any answer, it will probably be desirable for me to take myself, the Secretary of Legation, and the greater part of the Attachés off at once, leaving, if necessary, one or two of the junior attachés to pack up the archives and follow as quickly as possible. It is a case in which, above all others, delay will be dangerous. I am so convinced that

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unless we give our friends here a good lesson this time, we shall have the same trouble with them again very soon, under less advantageous circumstances, that even my regard for them leads me to think it all important that they should receive the lesson. Surrender or war will have a very good effect upon them, but anything less will make them more self-confident than ever, and lead them on to their ruin.

I do not think there is any danger of the Government's deliberately taking any step to precipitate hostilities upon my departure. On the contrary, if they let me go, it will be in the hope that the interruption of diplomatic relations will be all they have to fear from us. But they have so little control over their officers, that I think we must be prepared for acts of violence from subordinates, if they have the chance of performing them, in cases where no immediate danger is incurred. I shall suggest to the Governors and Naval Officers to take reasonable precautions against such acts. A filibustering expedition of the Irish on the frontiers of Canada, to damage the canals, or something of that sort, may also be on the cards.

It is generally believed that the Government will insist on an immediate advance of the Grand Army of the Potomac, in the hope of covering a surrender to England with (to use President Lincoln's phraseology) a "sugar coating" of glory, in another quarter if possible.

You will perhaps be surprised to find Mr. Seward on the side of peace. He does not like the look of the spirit he has called up. Ten months of office have dispelled many of his illusions. I presume that he no longer believes in the existence of a Union Party in the South, in the return of the South to the arms of the North in case of a foreign war; in his power to frighten the nations of Europe by great words; in the ease with which the U.S. could crush rebellion with one hand and chastise Europe with the other; in the notion that the relations with England in particular are safe playthings to be used for the amusement of the American people. He sees himself in a very painful dilemma. But he knows his countrymen well enough to believe that if he can convince them that there is a real

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danger of war, they may forgive him for the humiliation of yielding to England, while it would be fatal to him to be the author of a disastrous foreign war. How he will act eventually, I cannot say. It will be hard for him to face present unpopularity, and if the President and Cabinet throw the whole burden on his shoulders, he may refuse to bear it. I hope that without embarrassing him with official threats, I have made him aware himself of the extreme danger of refusing our terms.

Since I have been writing this letter, M. Mercier has come in and related to me more in detail the conversation he had with Mr. Seward the day before yesterday. In addition to what I have already mentioned, he says that he told Mr. Seward that it would be impossible for France to blame England for precisely the same course that she would herself have pursued in similar circumstances: that of course he could not pretend to give advice on a question concerning national honour without being asked to do so, but that it might be of advantage to the U.S. Government for him to dispel illusions which might exercise a baneful influence on its determination.

M. Mercier reports the conversation to-day to his Government. I think it as well, at all events for the present, not to put it into an official despatch, but it might perhaps be well that Lord Cowley[64] should know that I am disposed to speak in very high terms of the moral support given to my demands by M. Mercier.

I am told that the Senate is still more angry about the combined expedition against Mexico than about the Trent affair. They will hardly be so absurd as to manifest their displeasure in such a way as to add France and Spain to their adversaries.

P.S.—I have kept M. Mercier *au courant* of all my communications, confidential as well as official, with Mr. Seward, but I have given no information as to either to any one else.

There was now nothing to be done but to sit and wait for the American reply. It arrived on December 27, in the

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shape of a note from Mr. Seward of the most portentous length abounding in exuberant dialectics, but the gist of which was contained in the two following short paragraphs:--

"The four persons in question are now held in military custody at Fort Warren in the State of Massachusetts. They will be cheerfully liberated."

"Your lordship will please indicate a time and place for receiving them."

[64] Henry Richard Charles Wellesley, 1st Earl Cowley (17 June 1804 – 15 July 1884), known as The Lord Cowley between 1847 and 1857, was a British diplomat. He served as British Ambassador to France between 1852 and 1867.

The question of peace or war had hung in the balance for weeks, but the victory was complete, and British diplomacy achieved a success which was not equalled until Fashoda supplied a somewhat similar case in 1897.

So far from being intoxicated with his remarkable triumph, as would have been the case with some diplomatists, Lord Lyons communicated the news to Lord Russell in matter-of-fact terms which were typical of his calm and practical nature.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell
Washington, Dec. 27, 1861.

> It is of course impossible for me to give an opinion upon the argumentation in Mr. Seward's voluminous note. Time barely admits of its being read and copied before the messenger goes. But as the four prisoners are given up, immediately and unconditionally, it is quite clear to my mind that you will not wish me to decide the question of peace or war without reference to you. A rupture of diplomatic relations, not followed by war, would be worse than war itself, for after that, nothing but actual hostilities would ever convince the Americans that there was any limit to our forbearance.
>
> I hope, however, that the Note will, on further examination, be deemed sufficient. In that case it might not be unadvisable to give credit to Mr. Seward, in speaking to Mr. Adams, and the more so perhaps because Mr. Adams is, or at all events was, devoted to Mr. Seward and his policy. I cannot

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> say that my general opinion of Mr. Seward has undergone any change; but without inquiring into his motives, I must allow him the merit of having worked very hard and exposed his popularity to very great danger.
>
> I shall not be able to give you any information to-day as to the effect produced upon the public. Mr. Seward has begged me to keep the answer a secret until to-morrow. He intends to publish it in the newspapers here to-morrow, and has sent a copy to New York to be published simultaneously there. In the latter case it will be conveyed to the public in Europe, as well as to you, by the same packet which takes this letter. Mr. Seward told me he "had been through the fires of Tophet" in order to get the prisoners surrendered.[65]
>
> I have seen with very great satisfaction that you have informed Mr. Adams, in answer to the remonstrances about Mr. Bunch, that H.M. Government must and will hold communication with the Confederate Government. I am also extremely glad that the instructions to the Consuls on the subject have been sent to the Admiral to forward, not to me. In fact, if we are able to maintain peace with the U.S. it will be very desirable to

[65] In the Hebrew Bible, Tophet or Topheth is a location in Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), where worshipers engaged in a ritual involving "passing a child through the fire", most likely child sacrifice. Traditionally, the sacrifices have been ascribed to a god named Moloch. The Bible condemns and forbids these sacrifices, and the Tophet is eventually destroyed by king Josiah, although mentions by the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah suggest that the practices associated with the Tophet may have persisted.

separate the Consuls in the South as much as possible from this Legation. It will hardly be possible for me to keep well with the Government here, if I am supposed to have the direction of communication with the enemy's Government.

I think it very important, with a view to the preservation of peace, that advantage should be taken of the opportunity to put Canada into a state of defence; and indeed (as I said in a despatch which I wrote in May last) to provide for the security of all our possessions on both sides of this Continent. While Canada, in particular, is apparently defenceless, the Americans will never believe that we contemplate the possibility of war. And it must never be forgotten that when they make peace with the South, they may have a large army to provide with employment, and an immense amount of popular dissatisfaction and humiliation to find a safety valve for.

My intention is to propose to Mr. Seward that I shall send a man-of-war or a British mail packet to

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Boston to receive the prisoners. I should propose that they should go in the first instance to Halifax. But I should suggest to the Captain to consult their wishes as far as possible, but certainly *not* to take them to a Confederate port. Neither of the ships of war at New York would, I suppose, be large enough to take them across the Atlantic, but I do not think I ought to refuse to provide them with a passage to Europe, if they ask for one. This seems due to them, inasmuch as it was the failure of the British flag to afford them protection which lost them their passage on board the *Trent*. Of course if they go in a mail packet, I shall take precautions against any risk of an "heroic" Captain applying the doctrines maintained here and bringing the packet before an American Prize Court for adjudication. In any case I shall give a caution to the Commander of the ship which takes them, that they are not to be received with honours or treated otherwise than as distinguished *private* gentlemen.

Those who have not seen the Americans near, will probably be much more surprised than I am at the surrender of the prisoners. I was sure from the first that they would give in, if it were possible to convince them that war was really the only alternative. My difficulty has been to make them aware that it was surrender or war, without making such threats as would render the humiliation too great to be borne. This was the object of my confidential communications with Mr. Seward before I gave him your despatch.

The main point having been gained, it remained to settle how the surrender of the prisoners could best be carried out without causing unnecessary ill-feeling and arousing a popular agitation which might drive the United States Government into committing some high-handed action in order to maintain itself. It was finally decided that, in order to avoid the trouble which Mr. Seward feared from the inhabitants of Boston, they should

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embark at Provincetown. They were accordingly conveyed in an American ship from Fort Warren to Provincetown, and there embarked on a British warship for Halifax, it having been expressly

stipulated that the transfer should not take place at night. From Halifax they proceeded subsequently to Europe.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Dec. 31, 1861.

The Americans are putting the best face they can upon the surrender of Slidell and Mason, and as far as has depended upon me I have done everything to make the pill as easy to swallow as possible. But I cannot disguise from myself that the real cause of the yielding was nothing more nor less than the military preparations made in England. They are horribly out of humour and looking out for some mode of annoying us without danger to themselves. There is a talk of discriminative duties on British goods, of a non-intercourse Act, and other absurdities. What is more serious is a proposal, which it is said will be introduced into Congress next week, to repeal the Act for carrying into effect the Reciprocity Treaty. This would be a direct breach of the treaty, and would of course be an indisputable *casus belli*. It has often been suggested before, in the old belief that we should bear anything rather than go to war with the U.S. I hope they have had a lesson which will make them wiser.

I cannot help fearing that it is as necessary as ever, nay more than ever necessary, to be prepared to give a warm reception whether to regular invaders or to filibusters from the U.S. who may make an attempt upon Canada. In fact I am not reassured respecting the maintenance of peace. For the present we have some security in Mr. Seward. For he must do his best to maintain peace or he will

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have made the sacrifice in the case of Mason and Slidell in vain. As in that case, so in others, he sees now that besides the utter ruin of the country, a war with us would give the ascendancy to the ultra party who are opposed to him in the Cabinet and in Congress. He fears too, and with great reason, that it would throw the country into a state of anarchy, in which chiefs of a totally different frame of mind from him would have the upper hand. But he may be swept away, or, if he find it impossible to hold his position or his own principles, turn round and play a desperate game with the ultras. I have given him the opportunity of offering amends spontaneously in three rather awkward matters, and, as you will see by my despatches, he has been prompt in seizing it.

On reading his enormous note at leisure, I find that it is much more of an apology than I thought from the hurried perusal which was all I had time to give to it before I sent it off to you. But with your letters before me, I should have taken much less *ad referendum*; for the surrender of the prisoners is after all the main question. On the other hand, I should not have gone out of my way to declare, on my own responsibility, that the note was perfectly satisfactory, unless it had contained a formal apology in plain words.

I have a better opinion of the Boston mob than Mr. Seward has, and should have had very little fear of the prisoners being insulted, if I had taken them from Fort Warren directly on board a British man-of-war. I am not sorry however to spare the Bostonians (who are

> among the most friendly to us of the Americans) what they might consider a mortifying and humiliating spectacle. I have at Mr. Seward's request not made the name of the place at which the prisoners are to be transferred generally known. Indeed, I found that many people were going to Boston to be present on the occasion, and there is no advantage in having a crowd or a sensation about it.

It is sad to record that some of the American clergy showed a most unchristianlike spirit in connection with the termination of the *Trent* case; the following remarkable prayer uttered in the Senate affording an instructive example:--

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Thirty-Seventh Congress—Second Session.
In Senate—Monday, December 30, 1861.
[Prayer by Revd. Dr. Sunderland.]

> O Thou, just Ruler of the world, in this hour of our trial, when domestic treason stabs at the nation's heart, and foreign arrogance is emboldened to defeat the public justice of the world, we ask help of Thee for our rulers and our people, that we may patiently, resolutely, and with one heart abide our time; for it is indeed a day of darkness and reproach—a day when the high principle of human equity, constrained by the remorseless sweep of physical and armed force, must for the moment succumb under the plastic forms of soft diplomacy. Yet, in the face of this, will we not be shaken in our conviction that Thou art ever with him who, in the interest of human liberty and the Christian faith, by all the means in his power works righteousness and defends the truth.
>
> O God, give to this our nation honesty, unity and courage; bring this unnatural rebellion to a speedy end; and then prepare us to assert upon a broader scale, and with a vaster force, the inalienable rights and responsibilities of man: through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Upon the whole, except for occasional manifestations of ill-humour, such as, for instance, a resolution in the House of Representatives in favour of creating a great navy to "defend the seas from the sway of an arbitrary trident," the surrender was taken quietly, and Mr. Seward handsomely acknowledged the great consideration which had been shown by Lord Lyons in his conduct of the negotiations.

Congratulations now began to pour in upon him, and Lord Russell wrote that nothing could have been better than his conduct, and that his patience, forbearance, and friendly discretion had gone far to secure the favourable result obtained. Another communication from Lord Russell intimated that the Queen, "taking into consideration the judgment and conciliatory temper which you have shown in your negotiations at Washington, especially in regard to the *Trent*, has directed that you should be raised to the rank of G.C.B."

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In acknowledging these congratulations, Lord Lyons disclaimed having performed any brilliant or striking service. The only merit which he attributed to himself was that of having laboured quietly and sedulously to smooth over difficulties and to carry out the instructions he received from the

Foreign Office. Writing to Mr. Hammond, he explained that he had resisted the temptation "to do something" which always besets one when one is anxious about a matter; and that from the first he had been convinced that the more quiet he kept the better would be the chance of the instructions from home producing their effect. To other correspondents he expressed the view that it was the British military preparations which had turned the scale in favour of peace.

It would, of course, be an exaggeration to attribute solely to Lord Lyons the credit of having successfully prevented the calamity of a war between England and the United States. That credit is in reality due to others as well as to himself: to the Home Government for their prompt and decisive precautions, to the Prince Consort for his timely interposition, to the French Government for their loyal support at a critical moment, and to the good sense eventually displayed by the Americans themselves. But no one reading the *Trent* correspondence can fail to realize that the issue of peace or war depended to a great extent upon the method in which the British representative at Washington carried out his task, and that the slightest error in judgment on his part would have rendered the conflict inevitable.

In after years Lord Lyons frequently expressed the opinion that if there had then been telegraphic

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communication across the Atlantic it would have been impossible to avert war, and it is more than likely that he was correct, although it is improbable that many people realized it at the time.

It is also evident that a judicious silence may occasionally be of inestimable value. It not unfrequently happens that taciturnity is mistaken for profundity—

> "O, my Antonio, I do know of those,
> That therefore only are reported wise
> For saying nothing."[66]

and many a diplomatist and many a politician has gained a reputation for excessive sagacity by possessing sufficient good sense to conceal his ignorance by maintaining silence, but the restraint which enabled Lord Lyons to refrain from saying a single word upon a question over which the whole population of the United States was buzzing for six or seven weeks was little else than an inspiration.

[66] Gratiano in Scene I of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

CHAPTER IV

COURSE OF THE CIVIL WAR (1862-1865)

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Although the immediate danger of war between England and America had at all events temporarily vanished, and the United States Government had put a good face upon the matter, it was only natural that a soreness should remain; nor did the slowness of military operations tend to restore that government to a more equable frame of mind. Much of the enthusiasm which marked the outbreak of hostilities had already evaporated, but the hatred of the South had continued to grow in intensity, and although the latter was undoubtedly suffering great hardships and privations, there was no sign of failing courage, and every prospect of a long and bitter contest. The difficulty of finding men for the Northern army continued to increase; the prospect of having to raise twenty or thirty millions sterling in taxes from a people unaccustomed to pay any apparent taxes at all for Federal purposes was particularly unpleasant, more especially as there appeared to be no immediate probability of a striking military success; and it was not surprising that the country showed signs of great depression. Under these circumstances, a marked division of parties in the North began to show itself. One, which may be termed the

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Revolutionary Party, was in favour of prosecuting the war at all hazards and by all means; of proclaiming the immediate abolition of slavery in the South; promoting a servile insurrection there; turning out the Cabinet, and even deposing the President if he proved to be an obstacle; keeping Congress permanently in session to spur on the Government, and the Generals, maintaining a paper currency by inflicting heavy penalties for depreciating it, and so on. The Foreign Policy of this party consisted in a return to reckless conduct and language towards Europe in general, and an attempt to obtain the support of France against England.

On the other side, however, were now ranged the President, Mr. Seward, and the more moderate men. Mr. Seward had now, strange to say, become a kind of guarantee for peace, for after the concessions he had made, a foreign war would have been fatal to his reputation, and it was only fair to assume that his conversion to a more moderate course was genuine. Still there was danger to England from both sides. If the party of violence should show itself reckless enough to risk anything, the moderate party might conceivably provoke a foreign war either as an excuse for giving up the contest with the South, or to divert popular irritation after having abandoned the contest as hopeless.

Meanwhile, Mr. Seward's demeanour towards England had changed so much that, early in 1862, his friendliness had become actually embarrassing. Quite a considerable force, according to British standards, amounting to something like 12,000 men, had been already despatched, or were under orders to proceed to Canada, and

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Mr. Seward now made the surprising offer that these troops and stores should be landed at Portland, a port in the United States, and sent overland to Canada. However well meant the invitation, it would manifestly have been most imprudent to accept it. It must have been plain to the densest

understanding that these troops and stores were only being sent to Canada in order that we might be prepared, if unhappily a rupture should take place between England and the United States. Therefore, if troops and stores so conveyed were eventually used against the United States, there would have been a violent outcry of treachery against us throughout the country. The danger, too, of some unpleasant incident occurring during the landing or during the passage of the trains with which it would be impossible to deal, was so obvious, that the invitation was declined with thanks. Too much love is sometimes almost more inconvenient in diplomacy than hatred.

Mr. Seward's anxiety, at this time, however, to show himself a friend to England continued, and he took particular care to point out, in proof of his new attitude, that up till the last moment (December 26) he had been the only person in the Government who was in favour of the surrender of Slidell and Mason, and that President Lincoln had been opposed to surrender and was in favour of arbitration only. In fact, Mr. Seward appeared to be seized with the desire of overwhelming not only England, but France as well, with demonstrations of friendship and confidence, and it is perhaps not uncharitable to assume that two reasons were contributory causes to this agreeable change of tactics. One of these was that the appearance of a good understanding with these two Powers would exercise a beneficial influence upon the money market; the other was the fear of one or both of

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them recognizing the South and breaking up the blockade. Probably Mr. Seward's fears of French interference were increased by a visit paid by M. Mercier, in the spring, to Richmond, the Confederate Headquarters. M. Mercier, whether instructed from home or not, was bent upon this visit, which the United States Government could not prevent, but which they could hardly be expected to view with favour, and after the manner of French diplomatists of the period, he was probably unable to resist the temptation of trying to effect a striking *coup*, although there was not the slightest reason to suspect him of any disloyalty to his English colleague. Lord Lyons wisely declined to accompany him, and prophesied that he would end by getting into trouble, which proved to be the case, for the journey naturally gave rise to all sorts of comments. As will be seen from the following letter, both M. Mercier and Mr. Seward drew incorrect conclusions from the information derived during this visit; the former being convinced that the subjugation of the South was an impossibility, and the latter confidently believing that the end of the war was close at hand.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, April 23, 1862.

> M. Mercier came back from Richmond yesterday. He went soon after his arrival to see Mr. Seward and came afterwards to me. He is persuaded that the confidence and the resolution of the Confederates are increased rather than diminished by recent events. If they are worsted anywhere they will still not surrender. They will destroy their stores of cotton and tobacco, and all other property which they cannot remove. They will retire into the interior of their country and defy the North to follow them. They will endure any privations and sufferings rather than be again united to

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the North. Their unanimity and devotion to the cause are wonderful. They are not carrying on a war in the usual manner for dominion as the North is: they consider themselves to be fighting for their homes and their liberty, and are making and are ready to make any sacrifices.

Such is the impression which M. Mercier says was made upon him by what he saw and heard.

I asked him whether he had obtained any specific information as to the extent of the naval and military resources of the Confederates. He said that they admitted that they were in want of arms and ammunition, and said that but for this they could keep a very much larger army in the field. They had no difficulty about men. On the contrary, they had more than they could arm. They had another *Merrimac*[67] nearly ready at Norfolk: they had an iron-plated vessel on the James River: they had iron-plated vessels nearly ready at New Orleans. If they lost New Orleans and all the seaboard, they would be as far from being subdued as ever.

I inquired of M. Mercier whether he had entered upon any particular matter of business with the members of the Confederate Government. He said he had avoided the appearance of having come to transact business: that the French tobacco would be spared if the rest was burnt, provided it could be distinguished and separated from that belonging to private persons.

I asked M. Mercier if anything had passed on the subject of the position of the Consuls. He said that if the idea of calling upon them to take out exequaturs[68] from the Confederate Government had ever been entertained, it was now abandoned; there appeared to be a very good disposition towards foreigners in general; less good perhaps towards the English as a nation than others, perhaps because more had been expected from that country than from any other, and the disappointment had consequently been greater. On the other hand, the Confederate leaders professed to have abandoned all expectation of succour from Europe: indeed, they declared that all they desired was such an interruption of the blockade as would enable them to get arms.

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M. Mercier said that he was more than ever convinced that the restoration of the old Union was impossible; that he believed the war would, if the Powers of Europe exercised no influence upon it, last for years; that he thought that in the end the independence of the South must be recognized, and that the governments of Europe should be on the watch for

[67] USS Merrimack, variant spelling Merrimac, was a steam frigate, best known as the hull upon which the ironclad warship CSS Virginia was constructed during the American Civil War. The CSS Virginia then took part in the Battle of Hampton Roads (also known as 'the Battle of the Monitor and the Merrimack') in the first, but inconclusive, engagement between ironclad warships.

[68] An exequatur is a patent which a head of state issues to a foreign consul, guaranteeing the consul's rights and privileges of office and ensuring recognition in the state to which the consul is appointed to exercise such powers.

a favourable opportunity of doing this in such a manner as to end the war. The present opportunity would, however, he thought, be peculiarly unfavourable.

I did not express any opinion as to the policy to be eventually pursued by France or England, but I entirely agreed with M. Mercier that there was nothing to do at the present moment but watch events.

This morning Mr. Seward spoke to me about M. Mercier's journey. He said that M. Mercier had, probably without being altogether aware of it himself, obtained very valuable information for the U.S. Government. He himself was quite convinced from M. Mercier's account of what had passed, that the Confederates were about to make a last effort: that they had their last armies in the field; and that their last resources were brought into action. Their talking of retiring into the interior was idle. If the U.S. were undisputed masters of the border states, including Tennessee, and of the sea coast, there would be no occasion for any further fighting. Anybody who liked to retire into the interior was welcome to do so and stay there till he was tired. Mr. Seward went on to say that he had had some difficulty in preventing M. Mercier's journey making an unfavourable impression upon the public. With this view he had caused it to be mentioned in the papers that M. Mercier had had a long interview with him on his return from Richmond; he had in the evening taken M. Mercier to the President, which also he should put in the newspapers: to-night he was to dine with M. Mercier to meet the captain of the French ship of war which had brought M. Mercier back: to-morrow the President would pay a visit to that ship.

I suppose the truth lies somewhere between M. Mercier's views of the prospects of the South and

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Mr. Seward's. Mr. Seward was of course anxious to weaken any impression M. Mercier's language may have made upon me.

The Slave Trade Treaty has met with much more general approval than I expected. It has excited quite an enthusiasm among the Anti-Slavery party. I have never seen Mr. Seward apparently so much pleased. Mr. Sumner, who has had the management of it in the Senate, was moved to tears when he came to tell me that it had passed unanimously.

As had been foreseen and pointed out to M. Mercier, the most unsatisfactory result of his visit was the impression it produced that France was disposed to act independently of England, but there is no evidence to show that such were the intentions of the French Government at the time, and M. Mercier himself always showed himself to be a most frank and honest colleague.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, May 16, 1862.

The Government here is very much disquieted by the rumoured intentions of England and France with regard to intervention. This is not altogether without advantage, as they are more disposed to be considerate, or, at all events, civil, when they have doubts about us,

than when they feel sure of us. They are more civil to France than to England partly because they are more doubtful about her, and partly because they never will have, do what she will, the same bitterness against her as they have against England. Mr. Seward is encouraged by some of his English correspondents to believe that the Mexican affair will produce a serious disagreement between England and France.

M. Mercier thinks it quite within the range of possibility that the South may be victorious both in the battles in Virginia and in Tennessee. He is at all events quite confident that whether victorious

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or defeated they will not give in, and he is certainly disposed to advise his Government to endeavour to put an end to the war by intervening on the first opportunity. He is however very much puzzled to devise any mode of intervention which would have the effect of reviving French trade and obtaining cotton. I shall suppose he would think it desirable to go to great lengths to stop the war, because he believes that the South will not give in until the whole country is made desolate, and that the North will very soon be led to proclaim immediate emancipation, which would stop the cultivation of cotton for an indefinite time.

I listen and say little when he talks of intervention. It appears to me to be a dangerous subject of conversation. There is a good deal of truth in M. Mercier's anticipations of evil, but I do not see my way to doing any good.

* * * * *

The credit of the Government has been wonderfully kept up, but it would not stand a considerable reverse in the field. It is possible under such circumstances that a peace party might arise, and perhaps just *possible* that England and France might give weight to such a party. However, all this is a mere speculation. We are (as usual) on the eve of a crisis which is to clear up everything.

A threatened breakdown in health, due chiefly to overwork, forced Lord Lyons reluctantly to apply for leave to return to England before the severe heat of a Washington summer had set in, and in making the application he pointed out that during the three years which had elapsed since his arrival in the United States he had only been absent for four nights from Washington, with the exception of the two months during which he was officially in attendance on the Prince of Wales. The work in fact was incessant, the staff of the Legation scanty, and things were not made easier by the autocratic Hammond, who suddenly recalled one of the attachés to London, that

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enlightened bureaucrat being apparently quite incapable of realizing that a young man's time might be more profitably employed at Washington during the Civil War than in preparing for some perfunctory and trumpery examination which could perfectly well have been undertaken at any subsequent period. The appeals to the autocrat of the Foreign Office for assistance are as pathetic as they are moderate. "I conjure you to send me out two or at least one good working attaché as soon as possible. Brodie is completely out of health; Warre is always prostrated by the abominable

heat of this place; Monson[69] can do a great deal, but his constitution is not of iron; and as for myself I cannot do much Chancery work in addition to my proper duties. Indeed, I shall soon break down. What you see of our work gives a very small idea of the amount of it. It seems to me that everybody North and South who gets into trouble discovers that he or she is a non-naturalized British subject."

Nor were any high qualifications demanded. Geniuses were not in request. "What we want is a good steady industrious copier, *well conducted in private life*. I have no objection to quite a young one; such a man as Jenner would suit me perfectly. Anderson, Monson, and I are all sufficiently well up in ordinary Chancery management to make it unnecessary to have more genius or more experience than is required for copying."

Writing to his old chief Lord Normanby, the confession is made that Washington "is a terrible place for young men; nothing whatever in the shape of amusement for them, little or no society of any kind now; no theatre, no club. I have no time to think whether I am amused or not."

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Being constitutionally incapable of exaggeration, this last statement may be accepted as literally accurate.

Leave for three months having been granted, the sanguine Mr. Seward did not fail to draw hopeful conclusions from the circumstance, and there appeared to be no sign of immediate trouble in the near future.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, June 9, 1862.

> I was so unwell yesterday that I was unable to do anything, which has prevented my sending you by this mail some general information on the prospects of the war and some other matters.
>
> I did not think that Mr. Seward would object to my going. He has, in fact, taken up the idea with so much enthusiasm that I have been obliged to endeavour to check his anticipation of the wonders I am to effect, or rather to make him understand that my own views, not his, are those which I must express to you.
>
> I take his willingness that I should go as a sign that he does not expect serious trouble, for I think that he would rather be in my hands than those of a man new to him if he did.
>
> I am afraid that there are three things to which we must not blind ourselves:

[69] Sir Edmund John Monson, 1st Baronet, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, PC (6 October 1834 – 28 October 1909), misspelled in some sources as Edward Monson, was a British diplomat who was minister or ambassador to several countries. Monson entered the British diplomatic service in 1856 and was posted as an unpaid attaché to the embassy in Paris, where Lord Cowley, the ambassador, called him 'one of the best and most intelligent attachés he ever had'. This secured him an appointment as private secretary to Lord Lyons, the newly appointed British Ambassador to the United States late in 1858. In 1896 he became British ambassador to France.

1. That we have a very small chance of getting cotton from this country for a long time to come.

2. That there is no Union feeling in the South.

3. That the war has become one of separation or subjugation.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, June 13, 1862.

I had quite an affectionate parting with the President this morning. He told, as is his wont, a number

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of stories more or less decorous, but all he said having any bearing on political matters was: "I suppose my position makes people in England think a great deal more of me than I deserve, pray tell 'em that I mean 'em no harm." He does not pay much attention to foreign affairs, and I suppose did not like to talk about them without Mr. Seward. I am to hear Mr. Seward's last words at New York on Tuesday evening. I embark the following morning, and hope to pay my respects to you in person a few days after this letter reaches you.

It is quite time for me to get away from this place. The heat to-day is overpowering.

Lord Lyons arrived in London about the end of June, and a letter to Mr. Stuart[70] who had been left in charge of the Legation at Washington shows that he was considerably alarmed at the hostile feeling prevailing throughout the country against the North, largely due to the inability to obtain cotton, but also embittered by the tone of the American press. As an instance of this feeling, alluding to the rumour that McClellan had suffered a serious defeat, he adds: "I am afraid no one but me is sorry for it." McClellan's misfortunes certainly provoked demonstrations of pleasure in the House of Commons during an ill-timed debate which took place in July, and a celebrated speech by Gladstone in which he asserted that "Jefferson Davies and the leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made, what is more than either--they have made a nation," certainly tended to show that however impartial the Cabinet intended to be, the sympathies of England were to a great extent with the South.

During his stay in England he was in constant communication with the Cabinet, and the general belief of

[70] The Hon. Sir William Stuart, KCMG, CB (3 March 1824 – 1 April 1896) was a British diplomat who served as Minister to Argentina, Greece and The Netherlands. He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1845. He had a number of postings including Athens in October 1861, to Washington, D.C. in October 1862, to Constantinople in 1864 and to St Petersburg in 1866. The Washington posting was in the London Gazette, on 10 October 1862. p. 4823 as secretary to her Majesty's Legation at Washington.

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ministers was that whilst extremely reluctant to interfere in any way in the American contest, interference might be forced upon them. Mediation was again in the air, and M. Mercier and the French Government thought that an opportunity had arrived for proposing it.

Lord Lyons, after having been detained by Lord Russell for the purpose of additional consultations, set out again for Washington in October accompanied by the late Sir Edward Malet,[71] who remained for a considerable period on his staff, and became one of his closest friends. In fact, with the exception of the late Mr. George Sheffield,[72] who was already acting as his private secretary, and of the late Sir Michael Hubert (Herbert in the index)[73] who subsequently acted in the same capacity, it is doubtful whether any other person of his acquaintance ever reached the same degree of intimacy or shared his confidence to an equal extent.

The visit to England had in no sense changed the policy of the British Government towards the United States, and there were no fresh instructions with regard to mediation, intervention, recognition of the South, and the numerous other matters which occupied attention. Nor had any essential change taken place in the situation in America, and Lord Lyons, immediately after his return expressed the opinion that foreign intervention, short of the use of force, would only make matters worse. The indefatigable M. Mercier, however, in whose thoughts intervention was always uppermost, was full of a new plan, although, with the violent party predominant in the Cabinet, the moment did not appear propitious. M. Mercier's idea was that France, with the consent and support

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of England, should offer mediation alone. He thought that the difficulty which the irritation against England threw in the way of mediation might thus be avoided, while the fact of England supporting France would give to France the weight of both Powers. According to his information, Russia, probably from a desire to separate France and England, was disposed to join France in offering good offices, but, independently of other considerations, the presence of Russia might be an obstacle to the success of his plan. It would take away from the offer of mediation the element of intimidation, which, though kept in the background, must be felt by the United States to exist. The mediation of all the European Powers (France, England, Russia, and perhaps Prussia) would be a different matter. It might have the effect of reconciling the pride of the United States to negotiation with the South, and might, in certain conjunctions, be usefully employed. But it would be more

[71] Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, 4th Baronet GCB GCMG PC (10 October 1837 – 29 June 1908) was a British diplomat. Edward Malet came from a family of diplomats; his father was Sir Alexander Malet, British minister to Württemberg and later to the German Confederation. Edward Malet entered the foreign service at the age of 17. He served as attaché to his father in Frankfurt, then in Brussels. He was trained in the diplomatic service by Richard Lyons, 1st Viscount Lyons.

[72] *Alumni Oxonienses*: *the Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886,* by Joseph Foster, notes the following man:- Sheffield, George, 4s. Robert, of Normanby, co. Lincoln, baronet. University Coll., matric. 30 Nov., 1854, aged 18; scholar Pembroke Coll. 1856-61, B.A. 1858, M.A. 1865, a student of Lincoln's Inn 1857, in diplomatic service.

[73] The index shows Sir Michael Herbert for page 91. Sir Michael Henry Herbert, KCMG, CB, PC (25 June 1857 – 30 September 1903), was a British diplomat and ambassador. He was the fourth and youngest son of Sidney Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Lea, the British statesman, who was the younger son of George Augustus Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke,

easy for the Government of the United States to reject an offer from the four Powers than from England and France, or from France only. England and France had an obvious and pressing interest in putting an end to hostilities and the means of supporting their counsels by their navies.

Such was M. Mercier's plan, but he received little encouragement from his British colleague, who had anticipated something of the kind, and with habitual caution declined to pronounce any opinion until he had received instructions from home. As a matter of fact, he had foreseen this proposal when in England, and had obtained an assurance from Lord Russell that it should be discussed by the Cabinet.

The two following letters from Lord Russell to Lord Lyons show that M. Mercier was really in

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accordance with his own Government.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons
Woburn Abbey, Nov. 1, 1862.

> The Emperor of the French wishes to offer peace to both parties, and he says both parties will agree to peace, the one on the ground of Union and the other on the ground of Separation! I fear we are no nearer to peace, if so near, as we were a year ago.
>
> Seward's avowal to Mr. Stuart that he looks to mutual extermination and the superior numbers of the North, in order to restore the Union!!! is the most horrible thing I ever heard.
>
> Cobden,[74] I fear, is right when he says that to preach peace to them is like speaking to mad dogs. I am much less sanguine than I was, but I shall be glad to hear your views on your return. Russia must be a party to any thing done by us and France--if we do anything.

Woburn Abbey, Nov. 8, 1862.

> Flahault has been instructed to propose to us in conjunction with Russia to ask North and South to suspend their war for six months. I have not seen the despatch.
>
> We shall consider our answer on Tuesday next.

The Emperor's proposal was declined by the British Government, and at first peremptorily declined also by the Russian Government, but as soon as the latter perceived, by a speech made

[74] Richard Cobden (3 June 1804 – 2 April 1865) was an English Radical and Liberal politician, manufacturer, and a campaigner for free trade and peace. He started as a commercial traveller and became co-owner of a highly profitable calico printing factory in Sabden, near Clitheroe in Lancashire but lived in Manchester. In 1838, he and John Bright founded the Anti-Corn Law League, aimed at abolishing the unpopular Corn Laws, which protected landowners' interests by levying taxes on imported wheat, thus raising the price of bread. He was a Member of Parliament from 1841. In due course, Robert Peel, the Prime Minister changed his mind on the Corn Laws and they were repealed in 1846.

by Lord Palmerston at the Guildhall, that there was no chance of an acceptance of the proposal by England a circular was issued, stating that if France persisted in her intention, the Russian Minister at Washington would be instructed to give it moral if not official support. Thus, as on many other occasions, did Louis Napoleon's elaborate scheme vanish into space.

One fresh difficulty which had arisen in the meantime was the diminished influence of Mr. Seward with the

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President and his ministers. He had become much more conciliatory in his dealings with foreign representatives, but was apparently unable to carry his points with other departments, and had fallen in public estimation by signing the Abolition Proclamation which had been imposed upon him, in opposition to all his views by the Radical party in the Cabinet. Towards the end of the year it seemed quite probable that he would have to resign, and the contingency was viewed with consternation, for although Mr. Seward had very pronounced faults, he now represented the Moderate party, and his departure would signify the surrender of President Lincoln to the Ultra Radical party, prepared to risk everything, even to a foreign war, in order to maintain itself in power.

Upon the whole, there was every excuse for dissatisfaction with their Government on the part of the Northern public. After about two years' fighting the two main armies of the North and South remained in much the same position, but, if anything, the balance of gain appeared to rest with the South. New Orleans, it is true, had been captured, but the invasion of Virginia had failed, and Richmond was as unapproachable as ever. The North were the attacking party, and if they failed to advance it was equivalent to a defeat. Disappointment and discouragement had succeeded to confidence and enthusiasm, and if the contest imposed much severer hardships upon the Confederates than upon their opponents, there was no sign of faltering, and their spirit remained as high as ever.

Before the end of 1862 the prices of ordinary articles in the Confederate States had already greatly increased. As

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early as October, according to the consular reports, the price of tea at Savannah was sixteen dollars a pound; brown sugar sixty cents; loaf sugar unobtainable, and the commonest brown soap seventy-five cents. At Charleston, coal was unprocurable; black cloth fetched fifty-three dollars a yard; shoes cost thirty-four dollars a pair; beer thirty dollars a dozen; sugar a dollar a pound; butter a dollar and a half, and the pound sterling was worth fourteen dollars. In view of these figures it would be interesting to learn the cost of a banquet given by General Ripley[75] in December 1862, to some French officers at Charleston, at which Consul Bunch, of revoked exequatur fame, was

[75] James Wolfe Ripley (December 10, 1794 – March 16, 1870) was an American soldier who served as a brigadier general in the Union Army during the Civil War. In 1861, he was selected to be the 5th Chief of Ordnance for the United States Army Ordnance Department. In the early days of the war, he was instrumental in rifling and modernizing the artillery's ordnance. Additionally, Ripley also delayed the introduction of repeating firearms, particularly the Gatling gun and the Spencer rifle, into U.S. arsenals, an act that has been widely criticized by later historians.

present, and which must surely have been the most sumptuous meal ever partaken of in a besieged town since the days of Belshazzar.[76]

BILL OF FARE.

Oysters on Shell.

FISH. Salmon, Anchovy sauce.

SOUP. Green Turtle. Oyster.

RELEVÉES. Fillet of Beef, braisé with Mushrooms. Capon, with Truffes à la Regence.

BOILED. Leg of Mutton, Caper sauce. Turkey, Celery sauce.

COLD. Boned Turkey, garnished with Jelly. Chicken Salad, à la Française. Game Pattie, with truffles, decorated with Jelly.

ENTRÉES. Sweet Breads, larded en croustade, sauce petits pois. Fillets of Teal Duck, bigare, sauce Italienne. Quails, braisés, sauce Champignons. Snipe, broiled on Toast; Fillets of Venison, sautés, sauce Poivrade. Fried Oysters.

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RELISHES. Sardines, Olives, Celery, Assorted Pickles, Horseradish, Pickled Onions, Cranberry Jelly, Worcestershire sauce.

VEGETABLES. Baked Sweet Potatoes, New Irish Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes, Spinach, Cauliflowers, Turnips, Rice.

ROAST. Turkey, stuffed with truffles. Saddle of Mutton. Baked Ham, Madeira sauce.

GAME. Wild Duck; Wild Turkey; Venison, with Jelly.

PASTRY. Plum Pudding, Brandy sauce. Apple and Mince pies. Omelette Soufflée, Lady Fingers, Vanilla Kisses, Sponge Cake, Cup Custard, Madeira Jelly.

DESSERT. Apples, Nuts, Coffee, etc.

If, however, the South was feeling the effects of privation, the North had no cause to rejoice. In September, 1862, Lincoln had issued the preliminary proclamation of Emancipation, but the hope that it would consolidate the North had not been realized. The second proclamation appeared on January 1, 1863, and had no greater success, serving only to exasperate the South still further and increasing the divisions in the North. The Democratic party was afraid to declare openly for peace, but disguised efforts in favour of it were now made, and it was sought to induce some of the State

[76] Belshazzar was the son and crown prince of Nabonidus (r. 556 – 539 BC), the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Legislatures to pass resolutions in favour of an armistice and a convention. Men of all shades of politics had lost heart, but the most probable cause of peace seemed to be the impossibility of raising or keeping together a great army unless the national spirit could be raised by some

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striking military successes, meanwhile the division of feeling in the North had reached such a pitch that the patriots who had formerly clamoured for a foreign war to reunite North and South were now calling for a foreign war to reunite the North itself.

The general demoralization induced M. Mercier to make yet another attempt at mediation. Upon this occasion he was approached by the well-known journalist, Mr. Horace Greeley,[77] whose object it was to ascertain whether the Emperor Napoleon could be relied upon as a real friend to the United States in case of his being accepted as a mediator, a "real friend," meaning, of course, one who would insist upon the restoration of the Union. M. Mercier's fresh attempt met with no greater success than before, nor was it surprising, for his action was based upon an entire misconception.

Being firmly convinced that the restoration of the Union was impossible, he failed to realize that this must be the basis of all negotiations, and although most people were heartily sick of the war and were not prepared to refuse to the South all terms short of unconditional surrender, they had not been brought to the point of acquiescing in a cession of territory.

The French proposal, with which we had been careful not to associate ourselves, was, of course, declined by the American Government. Mr. Seward re-established some of his popularity by the character of his answer; distrust of the Emperor Napoleon increased, and the only party which benefited in any way was England, for the increase in ill-feeling towards France had the result of diminishing to some extent the animosity against us, and M. Mercier himself was now almost as much attacked in the press as the British Minister had been in the past.

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Early in the year, an incident occurred which might have had unpleasant consequences had it not been promptly dealt with. In spite of the endless embarrassments created by the blockade, the British Government was sincerely anxious not to give the United States Government any ground for complaint, and the Consuls had been continually enjoined by Lord Lyons to adhere closely to the recognized rules of International Law where a state of blockade existed. To his consternation he now learnt that the Consul at Mobile proposed to send away from that port a quantity of specie[78] in a British man-of-war. "I should be very much alarmed," he wrote, "if I thought it likely that he would find a captain of man-of-war as foolish as himself. I really could not answer for peace if, in addition to the irritation about the *Alabama*,[79] should come the fury which would be excited, if

[77] Horace Greeley (February 3, 1811 – November 29, 1872) was an American newspaper editor and publisher who was the founder and editor of the New-York Tribune. Long active in politics, he served briefly as a congressman from New York and was the unsuccessful candidate of the new Liberal Republican Party in the 1872 presidential election against incumbent President Ulysses S. Grant, who won by a landslide.
[78] Money in the form of coins.
[79] USS *Alabama* was a 1,261 long tons wooden side-wheel steamer, built at New York City in 1850 and operated thereafter in commercial service in the western Atlantic. The U.S. Army used her as a transport

it were shown that our men-of-war had carried Confederate gold through the blockade. No proof that the money was intended for, or even that it had been actually paid to, British bondholders would ever convince people here that it had not been used to purchase munitions of war." Unfortunately a simple-minded captain had been discovered by the Consul, and before it was possible to communicate with him, the specie had been shipped. This action, which was due solely to stupidity, was impossible to defend, and would have provided the American Government with a first-class grievance; clearly the best thing to do was to anticipate any complaints, and consequently the Consul was wisely dismissed before the matter became really public. The promptitude with which this regrettable incident was dealt with contrasts favourably with the difficulty which was experienced in persuading

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the American Government to deal adequately with grievances arising out of the proceedings of their own officials.

At this period of the war innumerable complaints were received from British Governors, Naval officers and Consuls with regard to the arbitrary proceedings of United States cruisers, and it was plain that these proceedings were largely due to the exasperation caused by the exploits of the *Alabama*, and by the rumours that similar vessels were being built in England for the Confederates. This exasperation was perfectly natural, but not altogether reasonable, for it never seems to have occurred to the Americans that the fault lay partly with their own Navy. Great pressure was put upon President Lincoln to issue letters of marque,[80] and had privateers made their appearance and exercised belligerent rights against neutral merchantmen, the difficulty of preserving peace would have been increased tenfold. Mr. Seward was known to be strongly in favour of the policy of issuing letters of marque, and the matter was brought to the attention of Mr. Adams by Lord Russell, who always appeared somewhat unnecessarily disposed to suspect Mr. Seward of hostile intentions.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
Chesham Place, March 14, 1863.

> I don't think Mr. Seward means to quarrel with us, but perhaps he will bluster rather more when he has lost the support of Congress.
>
> Adams told me that the privateers, if sanctioned at all, were not intended to interfere with nice questions of International Law, but only to encounter the *Alabama* and other vessels of that sort. If this be so I doubt if they will be fitted out at all, but if they are fitted out I think they will not keep

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> their hands off English merchant ships.

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during the spring and early summer of 1861, and she was purchased by the Navy at the beginning of August of that year for conversion to a warship. She was commissioned as USS *Alabama* at the end of September 1861.

[80] Documents issued by a government in a time of war allowing private ships to attack the ships and seize the property and citizens of a hostile nation.

> We have no thoughts of recognizing at present. If you are asked our intentions by Seward, say that our opinion is that the Republican Party ought not to leave the glorious work of peace to the Democrats, but as a Neutral Power, our intention and wish is to let the war work itself out, as it is sure to do by the moral exhaustion of the war spirit.
>
> Our procession and wedding went off splendidly. The Princess of Wales is charming and would make New York stand on tiptoe to behold her.

In a further conversation with Mr. Adams he made the significant remarks that if the contemplated privateers sought for Confederate merchant ships they would not find any, and that if they interfered with neutral vessels and the law of blockade they would probably involve their own and the British Government in "very awkward questions."

Lord Russell, in spite of his sincere and often proclaimed desire to remain absolutely impartial, hardly seems at this time to have realized the disastrous consequences of not having prevented the departure of the *Alabama* and similar vessels.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 28, 1863.

> The outcry in America about the *Oreto*[81] and the *Alabama* is much exaggerated, but I must feel that her roaming the ocean with English guns and English sailors to burn, sink and destroy the ships of a friendly nation, is a scandal and a reproach. I don't know very well what we can do, but I should like myself to refer the question of indemnity to an impartial arbiter.
>
> When things are more advanced towards a termination, I think this might be done. It would

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> be dangerous to do it at present, or even to hold out hopes of it. I will think further of it, and if I remain in the same mind, will submit the question to the Cabinet. The *Peterhoff*[82] and the *Magicienne* are now before the Law Officers. I will send you instructions about them next week. The seizures by Admiral Wilkes seem like a plan to embroil our two countries. He always protests that such is not his object, but his acts do not agree with his words.

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[81] CSS *Florida* (formerly *Oreto*) was a sloop-of-war in the service of the Confederate States Navy. She served as a commerce raider during the American Civil War before being sunk in 1864. Florida was built by the British firm William C. Miller & Sons of Toxteth, Liverpool. Launched in December 1861, she was purchased by the Confederacy from Fawcett, Preston & Co., also of Liverpool, who provided her engines. Known in the shipyard as *Oreto* and initially called CSS *Manassas* by the Confederates, the ship was the first of several foreign-built commerce raiders commissioned as into the Confederate States Navy as CSS *Florida*.

[82] USS *Peterhoff* was a British ship captured by the Union Navy during the American Civil War. Condemned as a blockade runner, she served the Union Navy's struggle against the Confederate States of America as a gunboat.

> I should like anything better than being obliged to take the part of the Confederates. But then President Lincoln must not be getting up war cries to help his declining popularity.

The two vessels alluded to had been captured on their way to Matamoros, in Mexican territory, and the British Government contended that the traffic to that place was legitimate, while the United States Government maintained, probably with justice, that the goods were intended for Texas. Matamoros, which was situated on the Rio Grande, separating Mexico from the United States, sprang into prominence in 1862 in consequence of the war, became the seat of a brisk trade, and provided one of the numerous difficulties arising out of the blockade, which had now been greatly extended owing to the rapid development of the Federal Navy.

As for Admiral Wilkes, the hero of the *Trent*, his arbitrary conduct was the subject of continual complaints; he showed marked discourtesy in connection with H.M.S. *Barracouta*, and upon one occasion a cruiser under his command went so far as to fire a shot across the bows of H.M.S. *Cygnet*, and as the long-suffering British Admiral Sir A. Milne observed, to fire a shot across the bows of a neutral ship of war when hove to, was going a step further in the already uncourteous proceedings of the American cruisers. Admiral Wilkes always disclaimed

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any intention of unfriendliness, but his proceedings were a fruitful source of irritation, and Lord Russell certainly conceived the impression that he and his official chief, Mr. Welles, were bent upon picking a quarrel with us.

Feeling between the two countries was not improved by the inopportune publication of a Blue Book. The Democrats, who had been faring badly, by some mysterious process of reasoning, came to the conclusion that the object was to destroy them and denounced Lord Russell for having lost them an election in Connecticut by his Machiavellian proceedings. They vented their indignation upon the Legation at Washington, and the position of the minister became more and more unpleasant, added to which his health again showed signs of giving way.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, April 13, 1863.

> I have written as much as I have time and strength for officially. I have been unwell all the last week, but not seriously so. I think the state of things here, as far as peace with us is concerned, more alarming than it has been since the *Trent* affair. They are not a people who can be soothed by concessions, and they are a people who after any amount of bluster will give in if they think that their opponents are in earnest and are stronger than they. I would rather the quarrel came, if come it must, upon some better ground for us than the question of the ships fitted out for the Confederates. The great point to be gained, in my opinion, would be to prevent the ships sailing, without leading the people here to think that they had gained their point by threats. I am in trouble altogether, for the good will to me personally, which had miraculously survived so long, seems at last to have sunk altogether under the stroke of the last Blue Book.

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It must have been peculiarly irritating, after all the efforts he had made, to find them neutralized by the clumsy action of the Home Government, but in his private correspondence there occur no expressions of resentment against those who had thus weakened his position, probably because his sense of discipline and loyalty to his official chiefs was so strong as to preclude anything in the nature of criticism. It is customary, before publishing Blue Books on Foreign Affairs,[83] to consult both the Foreign Government concerned and the British representative accredited to it, but presumably in this case the usual practice was not observed.

In one direction, however, there was an improvement. The British Government tardily realizing the danger arising from the building of Confederate cruisers in England took steps to prevent it, and the situation was eased for the time being.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, April 24, 1863.

> So far as I can judge in this short time the Americans have eagerly grasped at the intelligence of the endeavours to stop the Confederate vessels building in England, as a relief from their dread that they were really drifting into a war with us. I cannot yet say whether the exasperation is subsiding. I have not much fear that they will ever put a *casus belli* to us, but I do fear that they may force us to make demands upon them to which, however plainly just, party considerations may render it difficult for the administration to yield. I seem to be getting on pretty well again with Mr. Seward, but not with others since the Blue Book, and Mr. Seward cannot control the feelings or the actions of the other members of the administration either as regards England or her Representative here personally. However, for the moment, things certainly look more peaceful than they did a week ago.

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> I mean peaceful towards us, for there are no symptoms of an approaching end of the civil war.

One danger at any rate was removed, at all events temporarily, for the American Government determined not to proceed with the issuing of the letters of marque. The chief danger, however, lay not so much in the exasperation caused by the Confederate ships as in the proceedings of the United States cruisers, and it was feared that a repetition of such seizures as those of the *Peterhoff* and *Magicienne* might rouse such a feeling of indignation in England that it might become necessary to put forward demands for redress which the Americans would be too angry to comply with. For some reason, too, the relations between the British Legation and the Navy Department (perhaps owing to Mr. Welles's anti-English proclivities), were much less satisfactory than was the case with the other Government offices, and whenever an American naval officer had been admittedly in the wrong, explanation, regret, or redress were generally postponed so long (as in

[83] In diplomatic history, a *Colour Book* is an officially sanctioned collection of diplomatic correspondence and other documents published by a government for educational or political reasons, or to promote the government position on current or past events. The earliest were the British Blue Books, dating from the 17th century.

the case of the *Trent*) that the United States Government found itself in the position of having either to make a marked concession to England, or to run the risk of refusing just demands. Lord Lyons's usual practice was to leave the door open for spontaneous action on their part up to the last moment, and to abstain from making anything like a demand or even an embarrassing observation for as long as possible; but his difficulties in dealing with such questions were increased by a quarrel between Mr. Seward and Mr. Welles. Mr. Seward, to do him justice, generally seems to

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have exercised a pacific influence, but party spirit ran so high, and the Democrats detested him so cordially, that even those who were known to be friendly towards England could not resist the temptation of denouncing his "humiliating concessions to British arrogance" when they got the opportunity.

Lord Lyons to Admiral Sir A. Milne.
Washington, May 11, 1863.

> I have given Mr. Seward verbally a warning from H.M. Government that the impression which prevails in England that the United States are systematically endeavouring by fair means and by foul to stop our trade with Matamoros is producing very dangerous effects. Mr. Seward said that he should be able to give very satisfactory assurances on this head. I observed to him that I thought some decided practical steps were necessary to do away with this impression. I reminded him of his previous assurances and of his instructions to the Navy Department, and pointed out those instructions were apparently set at nought by the U.S. officers. I said that the great point was to make the subordinate officers feel the effects of the displeasure of the Government, when they violated neutral rights; that it was not likely the naval officers would pay much attention to the assurances given by the Government to Foreign Powers, and that it was not to be expected that they would pay much attention to formal instructions to themselves, if they found that they could practically violate them with impunity. The Government ought, I said, to remove its subordinates from situations in which they were peculiarly exposed to temptations to make an unlawful use of belligerent powers. I told Mr. Seward that I should regard another questionable seizure of a British merchant vessel in the neighbourhood of St. Thomas, or another questionable seizure anywhere of a British vessel bound to Matamoros, as little less than a calamity.

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> I trust that I made so much impression as to render it probable that these matters will be arranged for the present, as far as *words* go, and that something will be done to check the vexatious proceedings of the cruisers. What this Government ought to do is to remove their ships from St. Thomas altogether and recall Admiral Wilkes. I have not however much confidence in their doing anything really effectual. Many of the naval officers would like a war with England. They know well enough that it would not be a naval war, but they are envious of Captain Semmes[84] and the *Alabama*, and would rather roam about picking

[84] Raphael Semmes (September 27, 1809 – August 30, 1877) was an officer in the Confederate Navy during the American Civil War. He had served as an officer in the United States Navy from 1826 to 1860. During

> up prizes, than go on with the dull and harassing work of blockading. Then the universal exasperation in the country against England makes the Government unwilling and afraid to do anything which looks like a concession to us. Thus things are in a dangerous state, and it will be a great comfort to me to be within reach of you by telegraph.
>
> If any more privateers get out of our ports, the Government here may be forced by public clamour to issue letters of marque somewhat suddenly. Mr. Seward has verbally promised to give us notice, but this is a very vague assurance: of course it will not do for me to discuss beforehand any particular arrangements about them, because this would imply acquiescence in their being issued, which we are far from wishing to signify beforehand.
>
> I have been unwell for more than a month, and am beset by a quantity of small vexatious business concerning the wrongs of British subjects who have suddenly proclaimed their unswerving loyalty to the British Crown and demanded my protection.
>
> Many thanks for your private letter. You will think that I am trying to make up for the quality of my information by quantity of writing. The fact is I am too much knocked up to be able to write shortly.

The representations made with regard to Admiral Wilkes, partly owing to the good offices of Mr. Seward, at

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length produced a satisfactory result, and that enterprising officer was promoted to a command in the Pacific, much doubtless to the relief of all concerned. Lord Lyons was extremely careful to conceal the fact that he had been in any way instrumental in obtaining this transfer, and congratulated himself upon the advent of a temporary lull in the storm against England: a lull, however, which the escape of another *Alabama* from Liverpool, of a considerable Federal success or even a mere accident, might convert into an even more furious tempest.

Two years previously Mr. Seward had announced that the policy of the United States, unlike that of other countries, was "based on high and eternal consideration of principle and the good of the human race," but aliens resident in America, and more especially Englishmen, might have been excused for complaining that this lofty and inspiring ideal was accompanied by a vast amount of inconvenience and hardship.

Foreigners who have taken up their abode in a country where a state of war prevails are naturally subjected to much that is objectionable to them, in the natural course of things, and as a general rule find it extremely difficult to obtain redress, for whilst they remain in a country which is not their own they must submit to any exceptional legislation which the force of circumstances may require. Foreign Governments are not in a position to decide whether this exceptional legislation is justifiable or not, and the utmost that the alien can expect is, either that he should be allowed

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the American Civil War, Semmes was captain of the cruiser CSS *Alabama*, the most successful commerce raider in maritime history, taking 65 prizes. Late in the war, he was promoted to rear admiral. He also acted as a brigadier general in the Confederate States Army from April 5 to April 26, 1865, although this appointment was never submitted to or officially confirmed by the Confederate Senate.

time to depart, or that his Government should protect him by remonstrance or otherwise when he is dealt with illegally; and the general principle which is usually adopted is that foreign interference should be as sparing as possible and that the foreigner should take his chance with the native citizen.

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It was not long before foreigners in the United States were made to realize the disadvantages of living in a country where civil war prevailed. When hostilities began, the Government, reasonably enough, took steps to suspend when necessary the ordinary law, that being a practice almost invariably adopted by civilized countries under similar circumstances. Persons suspected of disaffection or treason were arbitrarily arrested, kept in prison under the authority of the military, and detained there without trial; and amongst these were occasionally *bonâ fide* British subjects and others who claimed to be such. Where martial law exists, it is only natural that occasional cases of injustice or harshness should arise, and it is clear that a certain number of British subjects suffered without due cause, but upon the whole it does not appear the United States Government exercised its powers with undue severity, or that it acted in a more arbitrary manner than would have been the case with a European Power in a similar position.

In February, 1862, nearly all political prisoners, other than spies, were ordered to be released on parole, and in April Lord Lyons was able to report that although the Executive Government retained the power to make political arrests it was rarely exercised. He stated that he was not aware of any British subject being detained arbitrarily as a political prisoner, and that although arrests without form of law were still being made by the military authorities in places occupied by the forces of the United States, they appeared to be confined in general to persons accused of offences affecting, more or less, the discipline or safety of the army.

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As was only to be expected, there were an enormous number of applications made to the Legation by persons who were aggrieved by the operation of martial law, but what gave far more trouble was the attempt of the United States Government to exact military service from resident British subjects.

The established principle is that resident aliens, in return for the enjoyment of ordinary civil rights, should be liable to discharge certain duties in connection with the administration of justice and the maintenance of order, and that in certain cases they may reasonably be called upon to take part in the defence of the country against invasion. On the other hand, the incorporation of aliens in the regular army or navy is manifestly unjust, for it prevents departure from the country and might conceivably incur the obligation of having to fight against their own countrymen. This, it is true, is not applicable to a civil war, but an alien might well argue that a civil war, waged between citizens for an object in which he, as an alien, had no concern, was a totally insufficient reason for dragging him into the contest. It is difficult to believe, for instance, that the United States Government would tolerate the compulsory service of American citizens in the army of a South American Republic in the event of an attempt being made to impress them during a civil war. Consequently, when hostilities began, the Washington Legation was besieged by persons who desired to be exempted from service by getting registered as British subjects, many of whom had

announced their intention of becoming American citizens at the earliest opportunity. *Prima facie* it seems only reasonable that persons who deliberately exchange one nationality for

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another, more especially if like many of the Irish emigrants they have professed undying hostility to England, and everything English, should accept any liability imposed upon them, but the question was complicated by the fact that they had not acquired full rights of citizenship, the naturalization of a foreigner in America, necessitating a residence of five years in the United States, and a declaration of intention three years in advance.

Instructions upon this question were requested from Her Majesty's Government before the war broke out, and in reply it was stated that there was nothing in International Law which prohibited a Government from requiring resident aliens to serve in the police or militia; if, however, the militia were to be embodied for active service, and substitutes were prohibited, then "the position of British subjects would appear to deserve very favourable consideration, and to call for every exertion being made in their favour." A similar opinion was expressed in July, 1861.

The difficulty really arose out of the defective military organization of the United States, which was based upon the voluntary system. The so-called voluntary system, which is in reality only a high-sounding device to impose upon an impecunious minority what ought to be a general obligation, may be an admirable institution in time of peace, but it invariably breaks down in a really serious emergency, and it was the totally inadequate nature of that system which forced both combatants in the American Civil War to have recourse to all sorts of discreditable expedients.

It has already been stated that at the beginning of the war the American regular army consisted of only 16,000

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officers and men all told. Immediately after the seizure of Fort Sumter, in April, 1861, President Lincoln called out 75,000 militia, and in May he called for 42,000 volunteers for three years, half of whom were to serve in the regular army, and half in the navy. At first these appeals were responded to with the greatest enthusiasm, but it was not long-lived, for, as has been related, even as early as the battle of Bull's Run in July, militia regiments insisted upon leaving at the completion of their period of service, and from that date the difficulty in finding recruits continued to increase.

The pay of the privates was in May, 1861, raised to thirteen dollars a month, which, however, may be considered low when compared with the five shillings a day we paid to untrained men during the Boer War, and it became clear that not only was it difficult to attract volunteers, but also to keep them when obtained. In view of the methods employed in recruiting them it was not surprising that the results were frequently unsatisfactory.

The usual method employed was to inform the Governor of a State of the number of men required. The Governor having made the necessary announcement, private persons came forward offering to raise regiments. Each set forth his claims, his influence in the State or among a certain portion of the population, and his devotion to the party in power.

From the persons thus presenting themselves the Governor made his choice. Generally the person upon whom the choice fell laid it down as a condition that he should have the command of the regiment. The next thing was to find soldiers. Friends seized with the same martial ardour promised to bring so many recruits if they were

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made—the one a Captain—another a Lieutenant—another a Sergeant, and so forth. The framework was thus formed and partially filled up, and the regiment being thus organized, the lists were carried to the Governor for his approval.

The inconveniences of such a system were obvious, and experience showed that it was much less adapted, than had been supposed, for the purpose of raising an efficient army. It was considered, however, to possess certain political advantages, one of which was that there was little fear of the officers ultimately forming anything like a separate military or aristocratic caste.

The real inconvenience of the system, however, was that sufficient men were not forthcoming in spite of the inducements offered by means of high pay, and the Government was forced to have recourse to all sorts of iniquitous devices in order to get hold of so-called volunteers, many of whom were foreigners. The most objectionable practice was that of giving bounties to agents for bringing in recruits. The effect of this at the beginning of the war was that great numbers of men deserted from the British navy, and the Admiral at Halifax reported that at one time there were a hundred deserters from one ship alone, the *St. Vincent*, but as the contest progressed the bounty system was responsible for innumerable cases of kidnapping in which British subjects were the sufferers. Kidnapping especially flourished in New York where the emigrants were an easy prey, and to such a point had corruption been carried that the Governor admitted to the British Consul that out of every million of dollars expended in bounties, fully four-fifths of the amount were secured by bounty and substitute brokers and crimps.

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> "The fraud and violence combined," wrote Consul Archibald[85] from New York, "which are now used in procuring recruits for both army and navy are disgraceful, and it is idle for the authorities to think of putting down the malpractices of the villains who carry on the business of kidnapping recruits, or of making the world believe they are sincere, while they hold out such inducements to these vagabonds for carrying on their White Slave Trade and Black Slave Trade too. I have numerous complaints, but, as in a great majority of cases the victims, at last, succumb and take a portion of the bounty, for they rarely get more than a portion, it would be unavailing to ask for their release."
>
> In the autumn of 1862, Fire Island was filled with unfortunates cheated and deluded, or forced thither by the police who received ten dollars a head for each man. Now in addition to the enormous bounties offered, there is placarded in conspicuous places on the walls of

[85] Sir Edward Mortimer Archibald, KCMG (10 May 1810 – 8 February 1884) was a British diplomat, a lawyer and an office holder active during the transition to responsible government in the colony of Newfoundland. Beginning in 1857, Archibald served as British consul to New York, a position he held for twenty-six years until his retirement on 1 January 1883. From 1871 he also undertook the additional responsibility of acting as British consul-general for New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

the New Park barracks at the City Hall the following very suggestive notice: "Fifteen dollars Hand Money given to any man bringing a volunteer."

The following report from a Federal General shows that the strictures of Consul Archibald were thoroughly justified.

Important Letter from General Wistar.[86]
Headquarters United States Forces, Yorktown, Va., April 15, 1854.

VICTIMS OF THE BOUNTY SWINDLERS DESERTING IN LARGE NUMBERS
EVILS OF THE PLUNDERING SYSTEM ON OUR ARMIES IN THE FIELD, ETC.

General—An extended spirit of desertion prevailing among the recruits recently received from the North, in some of the regiments of my command, has led me to make some inquiries resulting in apparently well-authenticated information, which I beg respectfully to communicate to you in this unofficial manner, deeming it required by humanity, no less than by our common desire to benefit the service.

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There seems to be little doubt that many, in fact I think I am justified in saying the most, of these unfortunate men were either deceived or kidnapped, or both, in the most scandalous and inhuman manner, in New York city, where they were drugged and carried off to New Hampshire and Connecticut, mustered in and uniformed before their consciousness was fully restored.

Even their bounty was obtained by the parties who were instrumental in these nefarious transactions, and the poor wretches find themselves on returning to their senses, mustered soldiers, without any pecuniary benefit. Nearly all are foreigners, mostly sailors, both ignorant of and indifferent to the objects of the war in which they thus suddenly find themselves involved.

Two men were shot here this morning for desertion, and over thirty more are now awaiting trial or execution. These examples are essential, as we all understand; but it occurred to me, General, that you would pardon me for thus calling your attention to the greater crime committed in New York, in kidnapping these men into positions where, to their ignorance, desertion must seem like a vindication of their own rights and liberty.
Believe me to be, General, with the highest esteem, your obedient servant,

J. J. WISTAR.
To Major-General John A. Dix,[87] New York City.

[86] Isaac Jones Wistar (November 14, 1827 – September 18, 1905) was an American lawyer, miner, farmer, soldier, and author. He served in the Union Army during the American Civil War, in which he was wounded twice. At the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861, Wistar chose to follow his home state and the Union cause. He raised a company of men and was elected its captain.
[87] John Adams Dix (July 24, 1798 – April 21, 1879) was an American politician and military officer who was Secretary of the Treasury, Governor of New York and Union major general during the Civil War.

These outrages committed in the name of the Voluntary System, and many of the victims of which were Englishmen, constantly took place even after the Act of July, 1862, which provided for the enrolment in the militia of all able-bodied citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, and it may be presumed therefore either that the United States Government was afraid to enforce its laws or that the so-called "volunteers" were

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chiefly foreign subjects. In any case, amongst these unhappy victims were numerous British youths under twenty-one years of age, and the efforts made to obtain their discharge on the ground of their being minors were rarely successful and eventually abandoned altogether.

In the South, apparently, the state of things was equally bad, if not worse; British subjects were imprisoned on all sorts of pretexts in spite of Consular protection papers, and enlistment was frequently the price of liberty. The Southern press was particularly scathing on the subject of aliens, especially Irishmen who endeavoured to evade military service.

* * * * *

> We can conceive nothing more disgraceful than the conduct of Irishmen, for example—but we trust they are few—who have been cursing the British Government ever since they could talk, who have emigrated to this country to escape the British Yoke, but who now run to an English Consul and profess themselves subjects of Queen Victoria in order to evade their duties in the land of their adoption. We say that we fervently trust there are but few Irishmen of whom this can be said, for such are a disgrace to their old island, and bring the blush of shame to the cheek of their compatriots who fight in our foremost ranks upon every field. Nobody will be more pleased than our good Irish citizens if these fellows are sent under guard to the camp.
>
> The attention of conscript officers is therefore called to the foreign Consul's offices, to the railroad cars and the roads.

The question of the liability to conscription of British subjects naturally produced a voluminous correspondence.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, July 24, 1863.

> Military events, or at all events military news, have been scarce during the last few days. The really important question seems to be the enforcement of the Conscription Act. On the one hand we hear of wide-spread plans of resistance to it, organized among the Germans, as well as the Irish population in all parts of the Country; on the other hand it is represented that the Government is determined to enforce it at the point of the bayonet, and to begin at New York, as soon as it can get things ready. We have as yet had no proof that any serious resistance to the Government will be provoked by any measures it may take. The Democrats at New York are, as might be expected, frightened by the mob—they dare

not encourage resistance to the Conscription, lest they should let loose an uncontrollable gang of plunderers. On the other hand, if the Government succeeds in getting military command of New York there is very little chance of any but the Government candidate's coming in as President when Mr. Lincoln's term expires.

British subjects are not the least violent in language about the Draft, and are far from being pleased either with H.M. Government or with H.M. Minister here. I have given myself a world of trouble to make the burthen of proving their claim to exemption as light as possible. If I have not succeeded as well as I ought, I have done more than most people, who knew anything about the difficulties, expected. I have written you a very long despatch about it—much longer than I intended, but I thought it well to put something on record to show that the matter had been properly attended to. I have taken more pains myself about it, and given Mr. Seward more trouble about it, than about any matter which I have had to treat with him.

M. Mercier's absence has made it difficult to concert measures speedily about the Cotton question,

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but his Secretary of Legation and I intend to speak to Mr. Seward about it to-morrow. We do not mean to go to Mr. Seward together. I have so little hope of effecting anything practical, that I should hardly feel in earnest about it, if it were a matter of less importance. As it is, I shall of course do my best. As soon as this affair is in train, I hope to set out for Canada. My present notion is to wait here for the despatches from London of the 18th—which ought to arrive the middle of next week—and to wait at New York for the despatches from London of the 25th, and then, if they bring nothing to hinder it, to go on to Quebec. I shall present Mr. Stuart as *Chargé d'affaires* before I leave Washington. It would be impossible to carry on the immense amount of protection to British subjects' business here, without some one on the spot who could write officially to the Government. Mr. Stuart is both perfectly capable of managing difficult questions himself, and perfectly willing to refer them to men higher in office when it is proper to do so—a rare combination of merits.

The question was finally decided to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government by a Proclamation of the President which allowed aliens a period of sixty-five days, during which their departure was permitted, and interference on behalf of persons who had failed to take advantage of the opportunity was subsequently refused. As for the difficulties experienced by the United States Government, they seem to have been met by enforcing conscription where it was possible, and delaying it where serious opposition was feared.

In August, 1863, a somewhat surprising proposal came from Mr. Seward. In a confidential conversation with Lord Lyons he expatiated upon the necessity of reviving a better feeling between Great Britain and the United States, and of making some demonstration calculated to produce the desired effect. England, he said, had made

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such a demonstration before the war by the visit of the Prince of Wales, which had been productive of the happiest results. Now it was the turn of the United States to make a corresponding display of goodwill, but it was difficult to devise the means of doing so, as the President could not travel, and America possessed no Princes. Would Lord Lyons think the matter over?

The latter, having duly reflected, expressed the opinion that there was no real hostility to the United States in England, although there was undoubtedly a certain amount of sympathy with the South, and that consequently there was no necessity to take any extraordinary step. Mr. Seward, however, having returned to his suggestion of making some counter demonstration in the nature of the visit of the Prince of Wales.

> "The only conjecture I can make," wrote Lord Lyons, "is that he thinks of going to England himself. He may possibly want to be absent for some reasons connected with the Presidential contest. If he thinks that he has himself any chance of being taken as a candidate by either party he is the only man who thinks so at this moment. It is however generally considered to be an advantage to a candidate to be out of the country during the canvass. I cannot see any good which his going to England could effect with regard to public opinion. If he considered himself as returning the Prince of Wales's visit, the absurdity of the notion would alone prevent its being offensive. The majority of the Americans would probably be by no means pleased if he met with a brilliant reception. He has, besides, so much more vanity, personal and national, than tact, that he seldom makes a favourable impression at first. When one comes really to know him, one is surprised to find much to esteem and even to like in him. It is however hardly worth while to say more on the subject, for it is a mere

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> conjecture of mine that he was thinking of going to England when he spoke to me. It might however be of advantage for me to know whether you would wish to encourage the idea of some public demonstration or other, if he should return to the subject when I get back to Washington. I told him that so far as public opinion in England was concerned, the one thing to do was to let us really have a supply of cotton; that without this demonstrations and professions would be unsuccessful: that with it they would not be required."

Whether Lord Lyons's conjecture was well founded or not, the prospect of a visit from Mr. Seward possessed no charms for Lord Russell, whose antipathy to the American Secretary of State has been already noted. The following letter appears to be full of good sense and instructive as regards the real value of those visits of exalted personages which produce such illimitable enthusiasm in the press.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
Oct. 2, 1863.

> Upon considering Mr. Seward's hints to you of doing something here as an equivalent or a return for the Prince of Wales's visit to the United States, I do not see my way to anything satisfactory. These visits of Great Personages seldom have more than a transient effect;

> they form no real and solid relation of friendship between nations, though if undertaken at a fortunate moment, they serve to bring out and demonstrate a friendship already existing.
>
> The visit of the Prince of Wales was thus fortunately well timed; but if Mr. Seward or any conspicuous statesman of the United States were to visit this country now he would find us all divided. The Government would show him every attention and civility: the Anti-Slavery party would probably make great show of sympathy by addresses and public receptions. But the party

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> who press for recognition of the South would hold aloof, and in some unmistakable manner, prove that there is a great deal of sympathy with the South in this country.
>
> In these circumstances I do not think that any such mark of friendship as Mr. Seward suggests would be likely to produce the good effect of which he is desirous. Mr. Sumner's conduct is very bad; he has taken infinite pains to misrepresent me in every particular. I have done my best to counteract his efforts by my speech at Blairgowrie. I don't know how far I may be successful, but I rely on your constant watchfulness to prevent any rupture between the two countries, which of all things I should most lament.
>
> The question of the ironclads is still under investigation. The Cabinet must consider it very soon, and I have no doubt we shall do all that is right to preserve our neutrality free from just reproach--unjust reproach we shall not yield to.
>
> I hope you are now quite well, and as the heats must be over I trust you will not suffer for the next six months from the climate of Washington.

Owing to continual ill-health, Lord Lyons was compelled to pay a visit to Canada in the autumn, and upon his return to Washington in October, accompanied by Admiral Milne, he found Mr. Seward in a more conciliatory frame of mind than ever, chiefly owing to the detention of Confederate ironclads in England. Mr. Welles and the lawyers at the Navy Department, however, still "appeared to be thoroughly wrongheaded and unable to see that municipal law is one thing and International Law and the relations between Governments another." The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase, engaged on an electioneering tour, distinguished himself by spirited speeches, talking of "taking Old Mother England by the hair and giving her a good shaking," and was himself

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outdone in rancour against England by another distinguished politician, Mr. Sumner. There was in fact no sign of change in the feeling of the people at large towards us, and the visit of a Russian squadron to New York was made the occasion of an anti-British and anti-French demonstration.

Considering that the war had now lasted for several years, it seems rather remarkable that the British Government had not thought it worth while to send military or naval officers to watch the operations, but judging from the following letter, the idea never seems to have occurred that there was anything to learn.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 3, 1863.

> I have no news of importance--political or military to write to-day. The crisis at Chattanooga has not yet taken place, so far as we know.
>
> I doubt whether people in Europe are aware of the extent of the progress of this Country in military strength or of the preparations which have been made for the contingency of a War with an European Power. It is impossible for me to undertake to give anything like detailed information on the subject; but it may be worth while for Her Majesty's Government to consider whether it is important for them to know what is really being done, and if so, what measures will be best with a view to their obtaining regularly information practically useful. I have no fancy for having a military or Naval Attaché—and I am not certain how the appointment of one might be taken here. It *might* create suspicion—on the other hand it *might* be taken as a compliment. I am inclined to think that Officers unconnected with the Legation sent quietly, but by no means secretly, would learn most.

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> But if the Legation is to be depended upon for the information, it is absolutely necessary that there should be in it some one having a professional knowledge both of naval and military matters. I myself know as little of such matters as any man—and were it otherwise, I have as much proper Diplomatic business to do as I can manage. The correspondence with Mr. Seward, which requires minute care in many cases, grows more and more burdensome. New cases arise daily, and the old ones never seem to come to an end. I have had considerably more than nine hundred notes from Mr. Seward already this year.
>
> I don't think the Government here at all desires to pick a quarrel with us or with any European power, but the better prepared it is, the less manageable it will be.

This suggestion was eventually acted upon as appears later.

About this time, the mission to Europe of Messrs. Mason and Slidell having failed in its object, the Confederate Government resolved upon the expulsion of the British Consuls resident in the South, who were informed that they could no longer be permitted to exercise their functions, or even to reside within the limits of the Confederacy. Doubtless the active part the Consuls had taken in endeavouring to prevent the compulsory enlistment of British subjects contributed towards this action, but the ostensible reasons were, firstly, that they received their instructions from the British Minister residing in Washington, and secondly, that Mr. McGee,[88] the Consul at Mobile, had been dismissed from his post because he had allowed specie intended for the payment of interest on a State debt to be shipped from that blockaded port to London on board of a British

[88] There are references in several sources to a Mr. James Magee (not McGee) who was expelled as Consul or Vice Consul at Mobile but no biographical details are reported. The following was reported as a question raised in Parliament in *Hansard. Volume 170:* debated on Tuesday 19 May 1863:— *Whether there is any truth in a Report of the removal of Mr. Magee, late British Vice Consul at Mobile; whether any conduct inconsistent with neutrality has been alleged against him; and whether his removal has been demanded or suggested by the American Government?*

warship. In Lord Lyons's opinion the action of Mr. Jefferson Davis's[89] Government appeared reasonable.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Nov. 17, 1863.

> Mr. Walker has sent me a copy of his despatch to you enclosing Mr. Benjamin's[90] letter to Mr. Slidell explaining the reasons to be given for the expulsion. The objection to the Consuls being under the orders of the Minister at Washington appears reasonable enough. As you know, I have all along been of opinion that the connection between the Southern Consulates and the Legation was full of inconvenience. The objection to Mr. Cridland's[91] appointment, that it was made by me, has, in fact, no other foundation than that your orders to Mr. Moore on the subject were sent through me; in transmitting them I took the precaution expressly to desire Mr. Moore to word the appointment as one coming from H.M. Government and not to mention me.
>
> Mr. Benjamin's lecture on the duty of Belligerents to pay their debts is totally beside the purpose. Of course no one could have wished more than I did that the British creditors should receive their money. I wished that all British subjects should be able to remove their property from the Confederate States, and most of all I wished that an unlimited amount of cotton should be exported. What I objected to was that a British Consul should engage himself in committing a breach of blockade, and that a British man of war, which had been admitted on the faith that she should carry away nothing but despatches, should carry through the Blockade the very article to the exportation of which the United States most objected. It is rather cool of Mr. Benjamin to say that the United States could not but have been glad that specie should be exported, when he knew that at the time the great anxiety of the Confederates was to get specie through the blockade to pay for their purchasers of warlike stores in Europe, and that the great anxiety of the United States was to prevent this.

At the close of 1863 it became evident that the cause of the South was failing, but the reverses of

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[89] Jefferson F. Davis (June 3, 1808 – December 6, 1889) was an American politician who served as the only president of the Confederate States from 1861 to 1865. He represented Mississippi in the United States Senate and the House of Representatives as a member of the Democratic Party before the American Civil War. He was the United States Secretary of War from 1853 to 1857.

[90] Judah Philip Benjamin QC (August 6, 1811 – May 6, 1884) was a lawyer and politician who served as a United States senator from Louisiana, a member of the Confederate States Cabinet and, after his escape to Britain at the end of the American Civil War, an English barrister. Benjamin was the first Jew to hold a Cabinet position in North America and the first to be elected to the United States Senate who had not renounced his faith.

[91] From the US Office of the Historian: Extract from the Richmond Whig of May 18, 1863. Foreign Consuls.—Mr. Cridland, for some years past her Britannic Majesty's vice-consul at Richmond, is about to leave this city for Mobile, having in his pocket the commission of full consul. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p1/d370

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the Confederates seemed only to stimulate them to fresh exertions, while President Davis's eloquent message in December proclaimed that the patriotism of the people was equal to every sacrifice demanded by their country's needs.

In the preceding autumn, Mr. Seward, in pursuance of his laudable policy of conciliation, had suggested that the Reciprocity Treaty with Canada, which would expire shortly, might afford an opportunity of making a friendly demonstration. His suggestion was that the British Government should make inquiries from him on the subject of its renewal, but Lord Russell, who was prone to regard him with suspicion, had not responded to this advance with any favour. In the early part of 1864 it became evident that the treaty was in considerable danger, and the Canadian Government began to show signs of natural anxiety, especially in view of the fact that a hostile motion was pending in Congress. The following letters disclose the objections of the professional diplomatist to being saddled with amateur assistants.

Lord Lyons to Viscount Monck.
Washington, Jan. 28, 1864.

> The Canadians appear to me to be acting unwisely about the Reciprocity Treaty at this moment. Their true policy is to keep as quiet about it as possible. The more they agitate, the more they convince people here that the Treaty is a good bargain for Canada and a bad bargain for the United States. The utmost we can ever dream of doing now is to stave off a successful motion in Congress calling upon the President to give the notice for abrogating the Treaty. I doubt whether we shall be able to do this, but our only chance lies in keeping quiet and endeavouring to induce the Executive

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> Government to exert its influence unostentatiously against the motion. If the Executive Government can be induced to do so, it will be by considerations connected with its relations with the Imperial Government. The moment the question is treated as one between the United States and the Provinces, all hope of maintaining the Treaty vanishes.
>
> I cannot have a Canadian here supposed to be peculiarly in my confidence on the subject. This would impose upon me a responsibility which I cannot undertake. Directly there was the least appearance of a Canadian being here in any such position, I should feel bound to take decisive steps to show that the appearance was false. My own opinion is that the Canadians will only do themselves harm by coming lobbying here; but if they choose to do so, they must do it entirely independently of me, and I would suggest that any who came for this purpose should not be furnished with letters of introduction to me, and should be advised not to call upon me.
>
> At the same time, I think it right to say that I do not believe that we shall find it possible to maintain the Treaty long after the U.S. can abrogate it. The impression is very strong that it is a bad bargain for them, and they will probably give the notice very soon after the terms of the Treaty allow of their doing so, with a view perhaps to negotiating another. If matters reach this point, it will no doubt be very desirable that whoever negotiates the new Treaty

should be thoroughly informed on all the details of Canadian commerce, and then will be the time for a Canadian Cobden to be sent here. At present there are no questions of detail to be considered: the only practical thing is to stave off the notice of the abrogation as long as possible, and the only chance of doing this, is, in my opinion, the exertion of the *Imperial* influence.

I very well understand the difficulty of keeping quiet when one is very anxious on a subject, and the immense relief it is to be doing something. I can also well understand that if there were a discussion on the details of the Treaty, the Canadians would wish to have an advocate better informed on the

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details than the British Minister at Washington is ever likely to be, but the object now is to *avoid* discussion.

It became necessary, however, to modify these views, for Mr. Seward changed his mind, and whereas he had at first discountenanced the presence of official and semi-official Canadian representatives he now expressed himself in favour of their coming over privately and lobbying Members of Congress, that being, in his opinion, an effective method of promoting good relations between the two countries.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Feb. 9, 1864.

I am very sorry to say that the agitation against the Reciprocity Treaty has gone on increasing, and that it now appears probable that a Resolution calling upon the President to give as soon as possible notice for abrogating it, will be passed by Congress. The Canadian Ministers are very anxious to be doing something in the matter, in order to cover their responsibility as regards their constituents hereafter. They had a desire to send an agent here to advise with me and to speak to the American Cabinet and to members of Congress. This I have told Lord Monck privately, I will not hear of. I could not undertake to keep the peace for a month if I had a man here by my side, over whom I could have no practical control, and who would be really guided only by Canadian party politics, but who would yet be supposed to be more or less in my confidence, and therefore to be entitled to speak for me and H.M. Government. My troubles are great enough without adding Canadian electioneering views to the difficulties I have to contend with.

Mr. Seward's opinion was that the quieter the Canadians kept the better, and so was mine, and so it would be still, if Mr. Seward had not changed his. He now thinks that discussion on the subject

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cannot be avoided, and a good effect would be produced by visits to Washington of influential Canadians coming "on their own hook" and talking in a friendly manner to Senators and Deputies. He does not recommend that they should appear to have any special

connection with me, nor any semblance of an official or quasi-official character of any kind, nor does he consider it to be desirable that any one individual should stay long.

I am corresponding privately with Lord Monck about this action of Mr. Seward's, and I defer writing about the Treaty officially until I come to some understanding with him about it. Mr. Seward's opinion is so much more likely to be correct than mine, that I do not like to discourage Canadians coming in the way he suggests. Beside which I have very little hope of staving off the Resolution for the abrogation of the Treaty in any way, and therefore do not feel justified in preventing efforts being made by the Canadians themselves, provided I am clear of all connection with them, and that they do not compromise me or the Imperial Government.

The attack on the Treaty is now caused much more by ill will to England and her Colonies than by any commercial or financial considerations. The same spirit has caused the introduction of a Bill into Congress to repeal the Act allowing goods to pass through the United States without paying duty in transit to and from Canada. In fact the absence of any serious opposition in Congress renders both Houses very unmanageable.

The views expressed in these two letters may appear unsympathetic as regards Canada, but apart from his rooted and well-founded distrust of amateur diplomatists, Lord Lyons's main task was to keep the peace if possible between England and the United States, and he was therefore justified in refusing to be associated with any persons who might conceivably add to the difficulty of a very critical situation. In addition to this he was always

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inclined to resent the tendency of Canadian Ministers to do a little diplomacy of their own, and held strongly that it would be time enough for them to think of diplomacy when they had provided themselves with an army and a navy.

The extreme caution which he constantly displayed in avoiding anything which might disturb American susceptibility in the smallest degree is well illustrated by a letter to Mr. Hammond respecting the appointment of a new secretary to the Washington Legation.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Hammond.
Washington, April 5, 1864.

I have been terribly frightened by hearing that there has been a notion of sending Mr. Horace Johnstone to this Legation. To have the brother of a man married to the sister of Slidell's Secretary of Legation in Paris would expose the whole of this mission to all kinds of suspicion and ill will. It is impossible for any one not here to conceive the captiousness of the Federals, in and out of office, on these points. It is almost beyond my power to keep matters straight with them, do what I can, and if I had a man in the Legation who was personally suspicious to them I should have no hope of keeping out of scrapes. If Mr. Johnstone were here, I think the only way I could employ him for the advantage of H.M.'s service would be in carrying the next despatches home.

So much alarmed was he at the prospect of Mr. Johnstone's appearance that he also communicated his objections to the Private Secretary at the Foreign Office, and even wrote to Lord Russell saying that if Mr. Johnstone arrived he should feel it his duty to order him to remain at the port of disembarkation until further instructions were received. Most men would probably have considered that the family connections of a junior

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member of the Legation were of no importance, but Lord Lyons was one of those who never took any risks.

In accordance with the suggestion made in the previous autumn, some officers were at last despatched from England in order to follow the operations of the Federal Army.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, April 19, 1864.

> The two military officers, Colonel Gallway and Captain Alderson,[92] sent by the War Office to report on military matters here, are about to set out for the Army of the Potomac. Some great attempt will probably be made by that army within a very short time. Everything is supposed to depend on the success of the operations. The Presidential Election and the Finances in particular hang in the balance. Captain Goodenough,[93] the officer sent here by the Admiralty, confirms my impression that the Americans are very seriously preparing for a Foreign War. I think we should never be for long without naval and military officers here to watch and to report on these matters. The men employed should be made to understand that their principal duty is to keep H.M. Government so well informed of the state of preparation and of the position of the naval and military forces of the United States that if a war were to break out at a moment's notice, our Admiralty and War Office would know exactly what to do. It is quite impossible that a Diplomatic Mission can do this without the assistance of professional men; and the more completely the responsibility is thrown on the professional men, the more effectually will the work be performed. With the present feeling of the United States Government I think the officers had better come with a decidedly official character, either as naval or military attachés to the Legation, or under any other name: but I do not think that the most effective mode of obtaining the

[92] Sir Henry James Alderson KCB (22 May 1834 – 10 September 1909) was a Canadian-British major-general in the Royal Artillery. He entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, as a cadet, in May 1848. Alderson received a commission as second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery on 23 June 1852, and served in Canada until 1854. Promoted to the rank of second captain on 1 April 1859, Alderson from February to June 1864 was attached on special mission during the American Civil War to the headquarters of the Federal Army under General Quincy Adams Gillmore during the civil war in the United States of America, and was present at the bombardment of Charleston.

[93] Captain James Graham Goodenough CB CMG (3 December 1830 – 20 August 1875) was an officer in the Royal Navy who served as Commander-in-Chief, Australia Station. In the 1860s Goodenough had recommended that an officer be sent to observe the American Civil War, and in particular, to obtain information about the ships and guns in use. He was nominated and left in HMS *Revenge* to tour United States Navy yards. He returned to England in May 1864. (Naval History Society of Australia and Wikipedia.)

> requisite information would be to let them subside into permanent attachés residing here, and making mere routine reports by each mail. It would, of

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> course, be well before publishing any appointment of a definite official character, to let me ascertain that it would be acceptable to this Government to have officers here in that particular character.
>
> There can unhappily be no doubt that three-fourths of the American people are eagerly longing for a safe opportunity of making war with England, and to what extent this feeling may be played upon, and with what results, during the Presidential Elections, no one can say.
>
> The ill will shows itself in many ways—principally in vexatious proceedings in regard to the neighbouring Colonies. The last attempt in Congress is to repeal an Act of 1831 in virtue of which there are no higher duties levied on British rafts, boats, and Colonial vessels in the American ports on the Lakes, than are levied on similar American craft in the British ports. I have spoken to Mr. Seward about it, and I hope, if it is a matter of importance to Canada, that we shall be able to stop it.

The ill will alluded to above showed itself in an unpleasant and undignified manner in connection with the visit of the British officers. Application had been made on behalf of Major-General Lindsay, M.P.,[94] commanding the Brigade of Guards in Canada to be allowed to visit the Army of the Potomac, and, much to the surprise of the Legation, a pass was refused by the Secretary of War, although the point was pressed as far as was prudent; but worse was to follow, for the Secretary of War actually refused passes also to Colonel Gallway and Captain Alderson, the two officers specially sent out by the British Government. "I do not trust myself," wrote Lord Lyons, "to say all I think about this discourtesy, but I have let the people here know that this is not the way to maintain friendly feelings, and have reminded them of the very different manner in which we treated the officers sent by the United States to the Crimea."

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Of more importance than this act of discourtesy was the apparent preparation for a foreign war on the part of the United States Government. There could, unfortunately, be little doubt as to the country against which these preparations were being made, and the danger was that, in the existing temper of the American people, advantage might be eagerly taken of any conjunction of circumstances which would enable a declaration of war against England to be made with tolerable safety. The letters of Lord Russell do not display a realization of the enormous increase of the military and naval power of the United States, and it does not appear that he appreciated the vast change which had taken place in the relative power of England and the United States. In the past, the latter had been restrained from provoking hostilities by fear of the advantages which the greatly superior military and naval forces, then habitually maintained by England, would confer on their enemy at the outset. Now, however, they considered the reverse to be the case. They believed,

[94] Lieutenant General Hon. Sir James Alexander Lindsay, KCMG (25 August 1815 – 13 August 1874) was a British Army officer, Conservative Party politician. He served as a major general on the staff in Canada from 1863 to 1867

and probably they were right, that they could throw an overwhelming force into Canada, and that sudden attacks on some of the British colonies, such as Bermuda and the Bahamas, would in all probability be successful. They believed that they could inflict enormous injury to British commerce, and it was plain that an immense booty could be obtained by sending out their swift cruisers with as little notice as possible.

It was difficult to discover an adequate explanation of the bitter feeling which, at that time, actuated the majority of the American people against England; and it was still more difficult to combat it, because it was largely

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unreasonable and quite regardless of facts and arguments. In reality it resulted from the exasperation caused by the civil commotion which constituted the first check to a previously uninterrupted course of progress and prosperity, and the Americans, mortified and angry, found it a relief to vent their ill-humour upon England, against whom they had an old grudge. Under these adverse circumstances, it is easy to realize how difficult must have been the position of the British Minister at Washington, and it is not surprising that his letters and despatches of the period were couched in a more pessimistic tone than had been the case for some time. "I am out of heart altogether," he wrote to Lord Russell, in consequence of the manner in which his representations to the American Government, with regard to the grievances of British subjects, were treated. These grievances related chiefly, at this period, to the hardships inflicted upon the crews of blockade runners and to the iniquities of the United States recruiting agencies, iniquities which were fully admitted in an official report of General Dix, the Military Commandant at New York, and in neither case was it found possible to obtain adequate redress. The following note will serve as a sample of the communications which passed:--

Lord Lyons to Mr. Seward.
Washington, July 3, 1864.

> This day week you came to my door with the President to tell me that I might write to England to say that Mr. James McHugh[95] would be released immediately. He was still in Fort Lafayette yesterday. What to say in writing to England to-morrow I know not. Could not orders be sent by telegraph to the military authorities at New York to release McHugh at once and to report by

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> telegraph that they have actually done so? I am very much pained by what has happened about Eneas and Rahming, as well as about McHugh, and am utterly unable to devise any satisfactory explanation to send home.

[95] James McHugh was said to be born in Ireland and therefore a British Citizen as reported in the reply to Lord Lyons quoted on https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p2/d241. Mr. Seward to Lord Lyons. Department of State, Washington, January 18, 1864. My Lord: I have now the honour to communicate to your lordship the facts relating to the arrest of James McHugh, referred to in your note of the 26th *ultimo*, with the views of that case which are taken by this government. James McHugh claims that he was born in Ireland, and is, therefore, a subject of the Queen of Great Britain.

To add to his troubles the health of Lord Lyons again began to give way under the strain, and as the following letter shows, his staff was insufficient for the work.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Hammond.
Washington, June 14, 1864.

> We cannot get on without more hands in the Chancery here. I could not refuse to let Heneage go, on the death of his father, but he was ill to be spared.
>
> One really first-rate second secretary and two ordinary working second or third secretaries should come out at once if the work is to be done. It has doubled since last year. We ordered an immense register which we calculated would last through the year, having made ample allowance as we thought for the usual progressive increase of correspondence. We are already obliged to order another of the same size.
>
> For my own part I am worn out altogether.

Although never prone to spare himself or to exaggerate, such phrases as: "I am worked to death here," and "I am worn out by the heat and the work," occur in letters to other correspondents, and in order to prevent a complete breakdown he was directed by Lord Russell to proceed to Canada to confer with Lord Monck as to the defence of the Dominion.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
July 23, 1864.

> I think it will be useful that you should go to Canada soon. If, as you think, the Americans may take

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> a sudden resolution to attack us, it will be important to consider how and when we can best defend ourselves. I should be very glad that with this view you should consult Lord Monck, and also that you should, if possible, see Sir James Hope,[96] who might come up the St. Lawrence to meet you at Quebec. The defence of Quebec both by land and sea is one of the most important points for the consideration of the Cabinet. It is also of great importance to ascertain what the Canadian Government are prepared to do for themselves.
> If, as is probable, Grant[97] will not succeed in reaching Richmond and is obliged to retire, the American Government may not be willing to add to the number of their enemies, especially as the Emperor of Mexico may have the assistance of French troops, and may hold an unfriendly position to the Northern, and a friendly attitude to the Southern States. I shall be glad to send a civil or military agent or commissioner to the Confederate States,

[96] Admiral of the Fleet Sir James Hope, GCB (3 March 1808 – 9 June 1881) was a Royal Navy officer who had a number of postings around the world. He became Commander-in-Chief, North America and West Indies Station, with his flag in the first-rate HMS *Duncan*, in January 1864.

[97] Ulysses S. Grant (born Hiram Ulysses Grant; April 27, 1822 – July 23, 1885) was the 18th president of the United States, serving from 1869 to 1877. In 1865, as commanding general, Grant led the Union Army to victory in the American Civil War. Richmond was finally taken on 2nd April 1865.

> and think of sending him by Mexico and Texas. It would be by no means a recognition, but would be useful as regards our interests in the Southern States.

Lord Russell never seems to have thoroughly believed in the ultimate success of the North, and frequently expressed the opinion that, as the re-establishment of the Union was impossible, it would be well to come to terms with the South, but he could scarcely have been expected to foresee that the day would come when the United States Government would order the Emperor Napoleon out of Mexico.

As regards the mission to Canada, Lord Lyons pointed out that whereas it was very desirable that he should confer with the Governor-General on many questions, amongst others, the "wholesale system of seducing, entrapping and kidnapping recruits for the United States Army from Canada," yet that his own opinion on the

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naval and military questions concerning the defence of that country was worth nothing at all. His general impression, however, was that the Dominion was altogether indefensible, unless the Canadians were prepared to make such a stand and such sacrifices as the Southerners had done. Whether he ever made any recommendations, as the result of his visit, or whether, if they were ever made, any attention was paid to them does not appear, but there is reason to believe that the British Government eventually nerved itself to spend the stupendous sum of £50,000 on Canadian defence.

The Canadian visit was undertaken very reluctantly, in spite of weariness and ill health, partly on account of the press of work, and partly because it would be necessary to leave as Chargé d'Affaires a Secretary of Legation (Mr. Burnley[98]), who had only just arrived in the country, and of whose abilities and judgment he was completely ignorant. Consequently he took the precaution of asking the Foreign Office to intimate clearly that, whether outside American territory or not, he should still be considered the superior authority in the Legation, and that if he deemed it necessary to give an instruction, it must be obeyed. This stipulation was not intended as a reflection upon Mr. Burnley, who indeed showed himself perfectly competent, but was merely an instance of that extreme caution which never left anything to chance.

At the end of August he was suffering so much from the excessive heat of Washington and from nervous prostration that he no longer felt able to discharge his duties satisfactorily, and set out for Canada much against

[98] Evidence of Mr. Burnley's activity is shown in a letter he sent to Mr. Seward the Secretary of State on 6 December 1864 as reported on the website of the US Office of the Historian at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1865p2/d3. 'With reference to my note of the 20th of October, and your reply of the 1st *ultimo*, and to my further note of the 26th *ultimo (i.e. of last month)*, relative to the case of the *Night Hawk*, I have now the honour to enclose the register of this vessel, and other papers duly legalized by the United States consul at Liverpool, for the purpose of setting at rest the question of nationality, as raised by your note of the 1st *ultimo*.'

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his will, remaining there until October. The change of air, however, effected little improvement, and letters to friends announcing his return complain of ill health and low spirits. While on the journey back, he met at dinner, at New York, by a singular coincidence, General Dix, on the night when the news of the St. Albans raid arrived. During the dinner the latter received a telegram stating that a band of Confederate desperadoes had made a raid from Canada upon a place called St. Albans, raided some banks and committed some murders. General Dix said that he had sent orders to the military officers in the neighbourhood to take measures for apprehending the raiders, and that he had directed these officers to use their best endeavours to seize them on American territory, but that rather than allow them to escape, they were to be pursued beyond the frontier, such action being, in his opinion, justifiable under International Law. Upon being asked whether he had given this order on his own authority or under instructions from Washington, the General admitted that he had acted on his own responsibility. This was clearly one of the most alarming incidents that had yet occurred, and had General Dix's orders been carried out, there must inevitably have been war between England and the United States. Fortunately, however, the American Government disavowed General Dix's ill-advised orders, and the prompt action of the Canadian authorities contributed towards a peaceful solution. The raiders were seized and made to give up their booty; police were stationed along the frontier, the volunteers were called out, and effective steps taken to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

The settlement of this affair must have been one of Lord Lyons's last transactions with the American

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Government, for upon his return to Washington his health rapidly grew worse, and as scarcely any letters from him are to be found between the end of October and the middle of December it is to be presumed that he was so incapacitated that the work devolved upon Mr. Burnley. Early in November he was forced to apply for leave, which was granted in December.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Washington, Dec. 5, 1864.

> I am truly obliged to you for so promptly sending me leave to come home. When I wrote to you on the 1st of last month to ask for it, I hardly expected to have such urgent need of it as I have now, but a few days afterwards I became so ill as to be utterly unable to do any work. I have not made any satisfactory progress towards a recovery, and am scarcely in a state to travel. There seems however to be no prospect of my getting any better while I stay here, and I shall therefore, if possible, set out for New York to-morrow, in the hope of being able to embark there for England on the 14th.
> I am told that the American papers have stated that I have been dangerously ill with typhoid fever. I have had no fever at all. My principal malady is a nervous headache.

In letters to other correspondents he explained that being quite unable to work he considered himself simply an impediment to the transaction of public business, and was going away simply on leave of absence. During the last few days of his stay in America he was too unwell to write,

or even, as he explained to Mr. Seward, equal to a conversation, and it was doubtful whether he would be well enough to travel. Accompanied, however, by

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Mr. Sheffield, he embarked at New York and arrived in London during the closing days of December.

The fact was that he had completely broken down under the continuous strain of the last four years, and in view of the circumstances it was not surprising. Some idea of the work at Washington may be gathered from the following official figures.

Despatches and Letters sent to and from Her Majesty's Legation at Washington during the year 1864.

Foreign Office	***To Lord Lyons***	966	***From Lord Lyons***	653
US Government	Ditto	1816	Ditto	2782
Consuls	Ditto	1155	Ditto	1390
Naval and Colonial	Ditto	311	Ditto	360
Miscellaneous	Ditto	2242	Ditto	3141
Totals		**6490**		**8326**

To these figures must be added a number of lithographs and other answers for which forms had been devised and which therefore were not registered, nor does it seem probable that Lord Lyons's numerous private letters to the Secretary of State and other correspondents are included; whilst there is no mention of telegrams.

It would really not be much of an exaggeration to assert that, unless absent or incapacitated by illness, nearly every one of these thousands of documents was either originated by or submitted to the British Minister. The late Sir Edward Malet in his book *Shifting Scenes*, has borne witness to the indefatigable industry of his chief. "At Washington any quantity of letters arrived daily asking every imaginable question, and often making

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untenable complaints. They were all opened by Lord Lyons, who made a pencil note upon them indicating the tenor of the answer to be sent, and returned them to the Chancery. Draft answers were then written, which were again sent up to Lord Lyons with the letters. He would nearly always alter the wording. Then he put an "L" at the bottom, and returned them to be written out for signature. In this way not a letter issued from the Legation which had not been approved by the chief. It was a most valuable safeguard, for you can never be sure what a young man may say when he gets a pen into his hand. It is the moment when the evil spirit of the Jack-in-office, unless he be entirely exempt from it, which is very rare, gets the better of him, and prompts him to make some epigrammatic or cutting reply. I learned no more valuable lesson while working under Lord Lyons than that every letter received must be answered, and that the answer must be staid in form and well considered in substance, whatever might be the ignorance, the petulance, or the extravagance of the writer to whose letter you were replying." It may be added that he rigidly

adhered to this practice throughout his official career, and that there must be many members of the Diplomatic Service now living who would corroborate the opinion expressed by Sir Edward Malet.

From the same source we learn the usual routine of the Chancery during the Civil War. The secretaries and attachés had to be at their desks at 9 a.m. They worked continuously without a luncheon interval until past 7 p.m., then adjourned to Willard's Hotel to indulge in the pernicious local habit of swallowing cocktails, dined at 8, and were frequently obliged to return to the Chancery afterwards and work till midnight or even later.

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There is no reason whatever to suppose that Sir Edward Malet indulged in any exaggeration, and it is therefore not surprising either that the junior members of the Legation occasionally broke down or that many of them were desirous of being appointed to some less exacting post than Washington. In spite, however, of the disadvantageous circumstances under which Sir Edward Malet passed his time at Washington, it is worthy of note that he considered that every one in the British Diplomatic Service should rejoice if he had the chance of going there, and he bore emphatic testimony that, according to his experience, English people were treated with extraordinary courtesy and hospitality however high political feeling may have run.

Lord Lyons, upon arriving in England, found a home provided for him at Arundel by his sister, the widowed Duchess of Norfolk, to whom he was deeply attached, and it was hoped that the rest and retired life would restore him sufficiently to enable him to resume his post at Washington. He made, however, little progress towards recovery, and for some time was almost incapable of either physical or mental exertion; in fact, so unsatisfactory was his condition, and so remote appeared the probability of his being able to resume his duties, that, in the spring of 1865, it became necessary for him to resign his post and to retire temporarily if not permanently from the service. A letter to Mr. Stuart, a former member of his staff, explains the circumstances of his retirement.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Stuart.
Norfolk House, March 16, 1865.

I am very much obliged by your kind letter inquiring for me. You will have seen that I

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have gone out of the service altogether and have become a gentleman at large without pay or pension. My health did not admit of my fixing a time for going back, and the Cabinet became nervous about leaving Washington without a Minister in these critical times. I confess I do not feel so much relief or even pleasure as might have been expected, and I seriously thought of offering to go back immediately when I heard of the decision of the Cabinet. But my own feelings as to health and still more the opinions of the doctors deterred me. I have certainly got a great deal better, but I seem to stick at a certain point. I can go about without inconvenience, but still a small thing brings on a headache. The old Legation at Washington is completely broken up. Malet goes to Lisbon, Sheffield to Frankfort and Kennedy and Seymour to Vienna. I to a certain extent enjoy being in England, but I am not well enough nor quite sufficiently satisfied with the wind up of my Washington Mission, to enjoy myself thoroughly. Lord Russell has been extremely kind

> to me, and so indeed has every one here, but neither I nor they can do much for my benefit while my health is in its present state.
>
> You seem to be doing well as usual in your present post, and you are, I trust, flourishing in all respects.

In a letter to Mr. Seward expressing his regret at being prevented from thanking President Lincoln in person for the unvarying kindness and consideration shown to him during the last four eventful years the following passage occurs:--

> You will find Sir Frederick Bruce[99] (his successor at Washington) as anxious as I was to act in concert with you for the maintenance of peace and good will, and you will, I am sure, be glad to form with him the confidential and intimate relations which did so much, in my case, to make my task easy and agreeable. The friendly and unconstrained terms on which we were produced so much good, that I am most anxious that my successor's intercourse with you should be placed at once on the same footing.

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Mr. Seward to Lord Lyons.
Washington, March 20, 1865.

> I accept your farewell with sincere sorrow. But I reconcile myself to it because it is a condition of restoration of your health. All of my family commend me to tender you assurances of sympathy.
>
> I have never desponded of my country, of emancipation of her slaves and of her resumption of her position as an agent of peace, progress and civilization—interests which I never fail to believe are common with all branches of the British family. So I have had no doubt that when this dreadful war shall be ended, the United States and Great Britain would be reconciled and become better friends than ever.
>
> I have thought that you are entitled to share in these great successes, as you have taken so great a part of the trials of the war. But God disposes. I feel sure that if I never find time to go abroad again, you with recovered health will come here to see the reign of peace and order. So I shall not dwell upon our parting as a final one.

It is satisfactory to realize that these two men, between whom so many encounters had taken place, parted on terms of friendship and mutual esteem. Each, in fact, had been able to appreciate the good qualities of the other, and in subsequent communications with his own Government, Lord Lyons frequently expressed the hope that Mr. Seward would continue to be responsible for the foreign policy of the American Government.

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[99] Sir Frederick William Adolphus Wright-Bruce, GCB (14 April 1814 – 19 September 1867) was a British diplomat. On Lord Lyons departure he was selected to fill the important office of British representative at Washington on 1 March 1865.

The official acknowledgment of Lord Lyons's services at Washington was couched in warmer terms than is usually the case.

Lord Russell to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 25, 1865.

> As your successor, Sir Frederick Bruce, is to take his departure this day from the shores of England,

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> I take this opportunity to testify to your Lordship the sense which Her Majesty's Government entertain of your invaluable services as Her Majesty's Representative at Washington.
>
> The return which I enclose of the number of despatches and letters received by Her Majesty's Mission to the United States during the years 1864 gives some notion of the amount of labour which has been undergone by Your Lordship, the Secretary of Legation and other members of the Mission.
>
> But the prudence, the moderation, the good temper, the discrimination and the just regard to a friendly Government shown by Your Lordship during the trying period which has elapsed while Your Lordship was charged with the most honourable, but at the same time, the most difficult duties with which any diplomatic agent can be entrusted, these are incapable of any remuneration and cannot be estimated by any measurement.

It is to be hoped that the previous pages have, to some extent, demonstrated that Lord Russell's language was not that of hyperbole, and that the value of Lord Lyons's unobtrusive services was not over-estimated. It was the good fortune of this country to be represented during a protracted and dangerous crisis by a man who, distinguished by exceptional prudence, tact, judgment, and sincerity, added to these qualities a most minute knowledge of his own duties accompanied with indefatigable industry. It is not too much to say that any one wanting in these qualities would have found it impossible to prevent the calamity of war between England and the United States, and the diplomatist who successfully avoids a catastrophe of this nature and at the same time protects the interests of his country is as deserving of gratitude as the successful commander who appears upon the scene when diplomacy had failed.

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One little detail characteristic of the man is worth noting. He used to state, in after life, with much apparent satisfaction, that during his five years' residence in the United States, he had never "taken a drink, or made a speech."

CHAPTER V

CONSTANTINOPLE (1865-1867)

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Although temporarily retired, it was scarcely probable that the Government would fail to utilize a man who had proved himself to be so valuable a public servant, and as early as February Lord Russell had already intimated that he proposed to offer to Lord Lyons the Lisbon Legation, although to transfer a minister from Washington to Lisbon seems a somewhat dubious compliment.

In June he was sufficiently recovered to receive the degree of D.C.L., and in the following month there arrived from Lord Russell the offer of the Embassy at Constantinople, Lord Russell being careful to state in his letter that the Queen highly approved of the appointment and that Lord Palmerston heartily concurred. The offer was of course gratefully accepted, and an urgent request that Malet and Sheffield should be permitted to accompany him was granted, although both had been already named to other posts. The appointment, when it became known, was received with general approval, and congratulations came from all quarters, but the signal compliment which had been paid him, far from turning his head, only elicited the expression that he knew rather less

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of the East than most people and that he entered upon his duties with many misgivings.

Accompanied by Malet and Sheffield, Lord Lyons arrived at Constantinople in October, 1865, under somewhat peculiar circumstances. It is unusual for two ambassadors to be present at the same post at the same time, but Sir Henry Bulwer,[100] in spite of many protestations that he wished to be relieved of his duties, was still residing at the Embassy, having possibly imbibed the spirit of procrastination from the locality, and it is conceivable that the Foreign Office considered that the best means of accelerating his departure was to send out his successor with orders to present his credentials as soon as possible.

The two ambassadors were lodged under the same roof. At first Lord Lyons was the guest of Sir Henry Bulwer, then the conditions were reversed, Sir Henry becoming the guest of his successor, and the comedy concluded with the simultaneous presentation at the palace of the letters of recall and letters of credence of the outgoing and incoming ambassadors. After rather more than a fortnight, Sir Henry Bulwer was induced to take his departure to some unknown destination, but, much to the embarrassment of his successor, announced his intention of returning before long. Those who are acquainted with the history of British diplomacy must remember a very similar episode which also occurred at Constantinople about twenty-six years ago, when a special envoy was residing there in addition to the ambassador.

[100] William Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer, 1st Baron Dalling and Bulwer, GCB, PC (13 February 1801 – 23 May 1872) was a British Liberal politician, diplomat and writer. Bulwer joined the Diplomatic Service in 1827 and was sent to Berlin in August that year, to Vienna in April 1829 and then to The Hague in April 1830. He had appointments in Belgium, Constantinople, Paris, Madrid, Washington, United States and Italy and became ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1858.

Lord Lyons to Lord Russell.
Constantinople, Oct. 25, 1865.

Sir Henry Bulwer received me very kindly and cordially, and has told me very fully what his views

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are, both as to Turkish politics in general, and as to the particular questions now uppermost. He had a private audience of the Sultan the day before yesterday, and after it, went on board the *Caradoc*, intending to sail the same evening. This, however, he did not do, and I went on board to see him yesterday afternoon. He meant then to sail at daylight this morning. I hear that he has now put off his departure till to-morrow. As to his destination, he seems to waver between Malta, Naples and Palermo. Lady Bulwer stays a little longer. Sir Henry talks vaguely of coming back here as a traveller in the spring, and the Sultan has offered to place a house at his disposal if he does so. I could not tell him that I thought it advisable either for the public service or for himself that he should come back so soon, especially as he thinks the place particularly disagrees with him. He has been so friendly and agreeable that I half blame myself for not being more willing to see him again here.

I can write little that can be depended upon about public matters here. Everybody represents everybody else as being engaged in a series of intrigues so complicated as to be utterly beyond my comprehension. Fuad[101] and Ali[102] appear very easy to get on with, and I think that I shall have little difficulty in transacting all important business directly with them, as long as they remain in office. My idea is not to give an opportunity for starting difficulties by announcing a great change which I should not be able to carry out, but actually to do the business myself, as much as possible without dragomans.[103] My colleagues seeing this will no doubt follow my example. The dragoman system will then languish, and the opportunity may then be taken of giving it the *coup de grace* if that should seem advisable.

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[101] Mehmed Fuad Pasha (1814 – February 12, 1869), commonly known as Fuad Pasha, was an Ottoman administrator and statesman. Among other posts, he served as Grand Vizier, the equivalent of Prime Minister, on two occasions between 1861 and 1866. He is often regarded, along with Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha, as one of the most influential Ottoman statesmen, who favoured a French-inspired civil code for the newly established civil courts in 1868.

[102] Mehmed Emin Âlî Pasha, also spelled as Mehmed Emin Aali (5 March 1815 – 7 September 1871), commonly known as Ali Pasha, was a Turkish–Ottoman statesman during the Tanzimat period, best known as the architect of the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856. Âli Pasha rose through the ranks of the Ottoman state and became the Minister of Foreign Affairs for a short time in 1840, and again in 1846. He became Grand Vizier for a few months in 1852. Between 1855 and 1871 he alternated between the two jobs, ultimately holding the position of Foreign Minister seven times and Grand Vizier five times in his lifetime.

[103] A dragoman was an interpreter, translator, and official guide between Turkish-, Arabic-, and Persian-speaking countries and polities of the Middle East and European embassies, consulates, vice-consulates and trading posts. A dragoman had to have a knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and European languages. In the Ottoman Empire, Dragomans were mainly members of the Ottoman Greek community, who possessed considerable multilingual skills, because Greek trading communities did substantial business in the markets of the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Indian Ocean.

> The impression made upon my mind by Fuad Pasha's conversation on the finances was that he will make every effort to pay the interest on the Foreign Loans regularly, but that the Government will frequently be very hard up for money and will then raise it by any expedient and on any terms

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> for the moment. In this way a new irregular internal or quasi-internal debt will arise, which, when it reaches a certain point, will have to be converted, or funded, or provided for in some way; and then the country becomes more and more involved. Whether the undeveloped resources of the country, which must be very great, can be brought into play soon enough to balance the growing debt, I cannot of course pretend to say. The great measure in contemplation is to secularize the Vacoufs.[104] The tenures on which this property is held and transmitted are so peculiar and complicated that it will require some study to enable me to understand the subject. I confess one cannot help feeling that most of the property will be interrupted by dishonest agents on its way to the Treasury.
>
> My colleagues seem very well disposed to be cordial and easy to deal with, but M. de Moustier,[105] whom they all seem to regard as the great difficulty, is not yet here.

The Constantinople Embassy, justly regarded as one of the big prizes in the British Diplomatic Service, is, under ordinary circumstances, the most onerous post of all; and, as past occupants know to their cost, the distinguished position occupied by the British ambassador, the almost princely state in which he lives, the magnificence of his residences, the charm of the Bosphorus and the pleasure derived from living in what is at once one of the most beautiful and one of the most interesting cities in the universe, are somewhat dearly bought by the constant, thankless, and fruitless labour in which they are habitually engaged. Their time is ceaselessly occupied in combating the intrigues of other Powers, in ineffectual attempts to redress the real or fictitious grievances of British subjects, in the urging of nebulous schemes vaguely described as reforms, and in hopeless efforts to avert

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the inevitable doom awaiting a people, who, in spite of some admirable qualities, are constitutionally incapacitated from realizing what are their true interests. After the stress and turmoil of the last five years at Washington, however, Constantinople must have appeared to the new ambassador almost in the agreeable light of a rest cure.

For once in a way, things were fairly quiet: there were no signs of any immediate crisis, and although the Turkish Government was involved in its habitual financial difficulties, in the autumn of 1865 the only questions which appeared likely to give rise to trouble were those relating to the

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[104] Vacouf is the French version of Turkish word vakıfs which are foundations established for charitable purposes, often focusing on education, health, and social services. They play a significant role in Turkish society by providing support and resources to various community needs.

[105] Lionel Désiré-Marie-René-François de Moustier (23 August 1817 – 5 February 1869) was a French diplomat and politician. On 28 August 1861 he was appointed Ambassador in Constantinople.

Moldo-Wallachian Principalities, to Crete, and to a Firman[106] for the Bey[107] of Tunis. But whatever may be the internal condition of the Turkish Empire at any given period, or whatever may be its external relations, there is invariably one representative of the Great Powers at Constantinople whose *rôle* it is to threaten, browbeat, and coerce. At the period in question this duty was discharged with zest by the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Moustier, whose mission it was to "*porter haut le drapeau de la France*"[108]—in other words, to bully and bluster whenever opportunity permitted, and of whom the Turks and his foreign colleagues stood in deadly fear. The Russian Minister at that time was the celebrated General Ignatieff,[109] of whom Lord Lyons subsequently expressed the opinion that "General Ignatieff would be an admirable diplomatist if he were only a little more veracious." And it seems odd nowadays to read that on nearly every matter the French and the Russians were in opposition to each other. In fact, General Ignatieff used to declare that his French colleague was so insupportably arrogant that it was impossible to

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do business with him. Each endeavoured to enlist the new British Ambassador upon his side; naturally, without success, as intrigue was essentially foreign to his nature, and he had no intention of allowing himself to become embroiled in their quarrels. Writing in November to Mr. Erskine, the British Minister at Athens,[110] he was able to say that "Here we are as quiet as possible; the disease with which the Turk is threatened appears to be atrophy; want of money and want of men. There are no questions of interest at this moment, nor even any particular matter for the diplomatists to quarrel about."

[106] A firman (Turkish: ferman), at the constitutional level, was a royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in an Islamic state. During various periods such firmans were collected and applied as traditional bodies of law.
[107] Bey, also spelled as Baig, Bayg, Beigh, Beig, Bek, Baeg, Begh, or Beg, is a Turkic title for a chieftain, and a royal, aristocratic title traditionally applied to people with special lineages to the leaders or rulers of variously sized areas in the numerous Turkic kingdoms, emirates, sultanates and empires in Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Europe, and the Middle East, such as the Ottomans, Timurids or the various khanates and emirates in Central Asia and the Eurasian Steppe. The feminine equivalent title was begum
[108] To carry high the flag of France.
[109] Count Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev (29 January [O.S. 17 January] 1832 – 3 July [O.S. 20 June] 1908) was a Russian statesman and diplomat who is best known for his policy of aggressive expansionism as the Russian ambassador to China and the Ottoman Empire.
[110] Edward Morris Erskine was born on 28 March 1817. He was the fourth son of David Erskine, 2nd Baron Erskine. He entered the diplomatic service as attaché to his father at Munich, and after various junior posts including attaché at Brussels he was appointed secretary of legation at Turin in 1852. He was transferred to the same post at Washington, D.C. in May 1858 but moved again to Stockholm at the end of that year. In April 1860 he was posted to St Petersburg, again as secretary of legation, but moved on in November to the same role at Constantinople. In 1864 he was appointed Minister to Greece.

Lord Lyons to Earl of Clarendon[111]
Constantinople, Dec. 6, 1865.

I don't know what to say of the Turkish finances. Notwithstanding the drought, the cholera, etc., etc., it is alarming that in a year of profound tranquility at home and abroad, the Government should find itself absolutely without money. As this was the case, I suppose a new foreign loan was better than scraping together, at enormous sacrifices, enough money here to provide for the interest of the old loans next month. They promise that they will pay over to the Bank, as it comes in, the revenue from the sources which are most certain, so as to provide in ample time for the interest on the foreign loans. But what will they have left to live upon? I am trying to get something like an accurate notion of what their prospects are for next year.

The only probability of trouble for the present seems to be in the Principalities. If Mr. Green[112] is right, the overthrow of Couza[113] by an internal revolution is imminent. As he is unable to suggest any means of saving Couza or of making any improvement in the administration of the Principalities, I

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don't know that he is wrong in thinking it best to leave things for the present to the chapter of accidents. At any rate I think I shall do well to try and keep the question as quiet as possible here until I have instructions from you about it.

As you will see by my despatches I do all the important business myself with Aali Pasha. Of course, I do not take a Dragoman with me when I go to him. I shall do away with the Dragoman system, as far as it is possible and compatible with the public service to do so. By degrees it may be done away with altogether—but it will be some time before it will be possible to get ordinary matters done at the Turkish office without having some one perpetually nagging at them who can speak to them in their own language.

A letter from the veteran Lord Stratford de Redcliffe[114] to Lord Lyons is not without interest as showing the views he held towards the close of his life with regard to the Turkish Empire.

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[111] Lord Clarendon, upon the death of Lord Palmerston, became Foreign Secretary in place of Lord Russell. (LN). George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon (12 January 1800 – 27 June 1870) was an English diplomat and statesman. He served a succession of Whig and Liberal administrations. This included as Viceroy in famine-stricken Ireland and, on the first of three occasions as Foreign Secretary, as the United Kingdom's chief representative at the Congress of Paris which ended the Crimean War.

[112] British Minister at Bucharest (LN). The Dictionary of National Biography, 1901 supplement includes Sir William Kirby Mackenzie Green (1836–1891), diplomatist, born in 1836 at Nauplia in Greece, who was the son of Sir John Green (d. 18 Sept. 1877), consul-general at Bucharest from 1867 to 1874.

[113] Alexandru Ioan Cuza (20 March 1820 – 15 May 1873) was the first domnitor (prince) of the Romanian Principalities through his double election as Prince of Moldavia on 5 January 1859 and Prince of Wallachia on 24 January 1859, which resulted in the unification of the two states. On the morning of the 22nd of February 1866, a band of military conspirators broke into the palace, and compelled the prince to sign his abdication.

[114] Stratford Canning, 1st Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe (4 November 1786 – 14 August 1880), was a British diplomat who became best known as the longtime British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. A

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to Lord Lyons
Dec. 13, 1865.

It gave me much pleasure to hear from you. I hope, and indeed I doubt not, that as time moves on you will be more and more pleased with the situation. You are lucky I think, to have no great questions to begin with. Sooner or later some will arise, and meanwhile you have time to sound the depths and shallows around you and to lay a good foundation for future action. Be assured that my good wishes will go with you, and if you surpass me in my own line, so much the better. I am now too old to be jealous.

It does not surprise me that the Principalities continue to give trouble. They stand in a false position towards Turkey. The allies have not been happy in their manner of dealing with them. Prince Couza's government is an anomaly. Austria would be a safer neighbour to the Porte,[115] even the whole length of the Danube, than either Russia or an independent Union.

The finances of Turkey are, no doubt, a great and growing difficulty. They *need not* be so

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with Russia in abeyance, the Empire guaranteed, an increasing trade, a Sultan who professes economy and no interruption of peace. But they *are naturally* so in right of ministerial ignorance, of an inveterate habit of abuses, of too much facility for borrowing, and of the little personal prudence at the Porte. I tremble at hearing of another large loan from France. It might be better if, acting in concert with our neighbour, we made the Turkish Ministers feel more deeply the responsibility of their extravagance and unwillingness to reform. I was glad to learn some little time ago that our Government presses the Porte for statements of its financial condition which may be relied on, and that the Ottoman Bank maintains its independence, as opposed to the rash requirements launched from Constantinople.

I sincerely hope that you will be able by and by to see your way to some progress in other matters of essential reform.

The financial outlook became so alarming that at the beginning of 1866 the Turks contemplated engaging a British Controller; but—and this throws an instructive light upon the intrigues which prevail at Constantinople—they were afraid to apply for one because they knew that if they did so, the French would insist upon a Frenchman being engaged as well. Aali and Fuad Pasha used to appear and make long speeches which "would have done credit to a Chancellor of the Exchequer,"

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cousin of George Canning, he served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister-Plenipotentiary to the United States between 1820 and 1824 and held his first appointment as Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1825 and 1828.

[115] The Sublime Porte, also known as the Ottoman Porte or High Porte was a synecdoche or metaphor used to refer collectively to the central government of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, much as people would refer to "Westminster" or "Number 10" for the British Government.

but their eloquence produced no practical result, and Sultan Abdul Aziz,[116] who, according to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was pledged to economy, possessed singularly extravagant tastes, foremost amongst his extravagances being a mania for buying ironclads and endeavouring to create an imposing Turkish fleet. As there was no necessity to build up a big navy and little probability of

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the Turks ever being able to make any effective use of it if ever created, the only thing to be said in favour of Abdul Aziz's hobby was that the ironclads were always ordered in England.

Lord Lyons to Earl of Clarendon.
Constantinople, February 14, 1866.

> There is rather a delicate matter for us which bears materially upon the Ottoman finances. The Sultan has a passion for ironclad frigates and insists upon ordering them. His Ministers (except, I believe, the Capitan Pasha[117]) make some feeble opposition. We have, I believe, rather encouraged the thing than otherwise. The orders are executed in England to the advantage of our shipbuilders, and I think Sir Henry Bulwer had an idea that though they would not be much use in the hands of the Turks, they might be manned and used to advantage by allies of the Turks in case of war.
> I think it would be undesirable, on many accounts, that we should now take the initiative in remonstrating against this particular expense. If however the question of Turkish finance comes up in Europe we shall hear a great deal of these ironclads and we may be asked to join France in a representation against them. We may possibly have to propose to France to join us. If we do anything it would be well to consult Musurus[118] confidentially, as he has a great deal to do with ordering them in England.
>
> There are, I think, three mailed frigates here, one nearly ready in England and one laid down there. It is also said that the Sultan insists upon one still larger and more powerful being ordered, but I do not know whether the order is actually given. The expense is of course immense in proportion to the revenue of the country and considering the rate at which the Porte borrows money.

What the result of consulting Musurus Pasha was, does not appear; but, in view of the determined obstinacy of Sultan Abdul Aziz, it is not likely that remonstrances from any quarter would have had much effect.

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In February, the difficulties with regard to the Principalities came to a head. Prince Couza, who had been elected Hospodar in 1859 (and who incidentally had given a great deal of trouble) was

[116] Abdulaziz or Abdul Aziz (8 February 1830 – 4 June 1876) was the sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 25 June 1861 to 30 May 1876, when he was overthrown in a government coup by his ministers.
[117] The Kapudan Pasha, 'Captain of the Sea' was the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy.
[118] Constantine Musurus Bey (1807-1891), sometimes called Kostaki Musurus Pasha, was appointed Turkish ambassador to the Court of St James in 1851. His diplomatic career began in 1848. He had previously represented the Sultan at Vienna in 1848 and served as Governor of Samos and Minister at Athens.

deposed by successful conspirators and expelled from the country, Mr. Green, the British Minister at Bucharest, having thus proved himself a true prophet. The inhabitants of the Principalities appeared to be unanimous in desiring the continuation of the Union, and, at the same time, a foreign prince as their ruler, to the consternation of the Porte, which had a well-grounded foreboding that a similar phenomenon would shortly manifest itself in other outlying provinces of the Empire, and that disintegration would follow. As for the other Powers concerned, the Russians were strongly in favour of a separation of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Austrians were credited with the same views, while it was feared by the Turks that the French would put forward a candidate of their own in the shape of a foreign prince. Eventually it was agreed to refer the whole question to a conference at Paris, into which the British Government entered unshackled by any pledges or previous announcement of its views.

Lord Lyons to Earl of Clarendon.
Constantinople, March 14, 1866.

> The Grand Vizier and Aali Pasha seem to be in very low spirits about the Paris Conference. M. de Moustier seems to be constantly frightening them. I am willing to comfort them, but I am determined not to say anything which may be interpreted by them as a pledge, either from my Government or myself. They are horribly afraid of France and they would like to lean upon us, but

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> they think that we care more for France than for them, and believe that we are apt to blame them for weakness without being willing to protect them against the consequences of their resistance. I think they are wrong in thinking that it would have been better for them to have had the Conference here. The French Government itself seems to me to be always more reasonable than its agents abroad.
>
> I have not been able to get any fresh information about the Finances. The Syndicate to receive the revenues set apart for the payment of the Foreign Loans is not yet established, though it is a month since Fuad Pasha assured me that the decree was "all but printed." The Commission which is examining the actual state of the Finances seems to have great difficulty in getting at the truth. None of its proceedings have yet been made public. I preach economy and retrenchment, but I have not mentioned the ironclads particularly to the Ottoman authorities as General Ignatieff appears to suppose. I have certainly not attempted to defend the expenditure incurred for these vessels when I have heard it attacked by my colleagues and other people.
>
> I have certainly got on very well with my colleagues hitherto, but then we have had no serious questions to discuss.

The unhappy Turks, bullied by Moustier, at their wit's ends to find money, and distracted at the threat of internal troubles, seem about this period to have once more recurred to the old proposal of a Russian Protectorate, and to have hit upon the brilliant idea of making money, at the same time, out of the Principalities.

Lord Lyons to Earl Cowley.
April 18, 1866.

> The Turks are very low, and I hear that a good deal of discussion goes on about the hopelessness of obtaining any efficient protection from the Western Powers, and the

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> consequent necessity of making the best terms they can with Russia. France they look upon as an enemy; England as a lukewarm and indifferent friend. They hope that they might get a good sum out of Russia for the Principalities; that they might satisfy her appetite for territory by giving them to her, and that then by letting her exercise great influence for the protection of the Eastern Church in the rest of the Empire, they might satisfy her, and persuade her to abstain from coming to Constantinople herself, and to keep other Powers off. Of course nothing so absurd as this, or at all like it, has been said to me by Aali or Fuad, but I hear that this sort of language is held by a great many Turks amongst themselves, and it may be a symptom worth noting.
>
> We are all anxiety to hear something from Paris about the Plébiscite and Prince Charles of Hohenzollern.[119] Till I know what our Government think, I can give no advice to the Turks.

The result of the Paris Conference was that Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was chosen as Hereditary Prince of Roumania, much to the consternation of the Turks, who saw in this practical abandonment of their suzerainty, the approaching disintegration of their Empire, and therefore began to threaten an occupation of the Principalities. This they were dissuaded from attempting, and the efforts of British diplomacy were directed towards obtaining a recognition of Prince Charles on reasonable terms, a task which was not facilitated by the Sultan's sudden dismissal of the capable Grand Vizier, Fuad Pasha, or by the refusal of the Roumanians to behave with even decent courtesy towards the Porte. A prodigious amount of negotiation and correspondence passed with reference to the Investiture of the Prince by the Sultan, and that the fault lay with the Roumanians is

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shown by the following extract from a letter[120] written in August: "The Turks have been wonderfully yielding and moderate about the Principalities, and if there had been anything of the same spirit at Bucharest, Prince Charles would have been invested long ago. There is a hitch now, and there will be at least more delay." In this troublesome matter the English and the French Governments worked together in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution, and the much-denounced M. de Moustier seems to have done something to help his colleague.

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[119] Carol I or Charles I of Romania (born Karl Eitel Friedrich Zephyrinus Ludwig von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen; 20 April 1839 – 10 October [O.S. 27 September] 1914), was the monarch of Romania from 1866 to his death in 1914, ruling as Prince (Domnitor) from 1866 to 1881, and as King from 1881 to 1914. He was elected Prince of the Romanian United Principalities on 20 April 1866 after the overthrow of Alexandru Ioan Cuza by a palace coup d'état. In May 1877, Romania was proclaimed an independent and sovereign nation. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire (1878) in the Russo-Turkish War secured Romanian independence, and he was proclaimed King on 26 March [O.S. 14 March] 1881.

[120] Lord Lyons to Mr. Stuart. (LN).

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley.[121]
Constantinople, Sept. 12, 1866.

M. de Moustier sets out for Paris this day week. He and I have been very good colleagues. Since Lord Clarendon decided to advise the Porte to recognize Prince Charles, M. de Moustier and I have worked cordially together to settle the Principalities question in that sense, and I hope the thing may be done before he goes. A stable honest government in the Principalities is the best thing for all parties, and the recognition of Prince Charles is the obvious means of arriving at this. Whether he will prove a success or a failure will depend upon his character and his ability to govern through the constitutional forms, for the Hospodar[122] must in fact for some time be a Cæsar or he will soon be nothing.

M. de Moustier is not at all liked by his other colleagues here, and he has inspired the Turks with more fear than love. As he and I have not differed on any serious matter (except just at first about the Suez Canal), I cannot very well say how I should have liked him as an opponent.

The Turks seem horribly afraid of Benedetti[123] as his successor. I wish the mantle had fallen upon Mercier, with whom I got on so well at Washington.

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It is strange to learn that Prince Charles, who has since developed into a model constitutional monarch, produced at first the impression of being a perfect firebrand, full of ambitious schemes, and actually credited with the design of eventually establishing himself as "The Charlemagne of the East." Mr. Green, the British Minister at Bucharest, thought it desirable to give him some paternal advice, upon his own responsibility, telling him that the Roumanians had no intention of putting up with a mere show Prince; that he would have to work hard; that great mistakes had been made since his arrival in the country, that these would eventually be visited upon his head, and that he should take warning from the fate of Couza. "He was very polite," added Mr. Green, innocently, "but I don't think he half liked what I said, or that he quite understood it. It was probably the first time he had heard the truth since he has been in the country."

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[121] In consequence of the change of Government, Lord Stanley (subsequently Earl of Derby) had now become Foreign Secretary. (LN) Edward George Geoffrey Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby (29 March 1799 – 23 October 1869), known as Lord Stanley from 1834 to 1851, was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served three times as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. To date, he is the longest-serving leader of the Conservative Party (1846–68). He is one of only four British prime ministers to have three or more separate periods in office. However, his ministries each lasted less than two years and totalled three years and 280 days.

[122] Gospodar or hospodar, also gospodin as a diminutive, is a term of Slavic origin, meaning 'lord' or 'master'.

[123] Vincent, Count Benedetti (29 April 1817 – 28 March 1900) was a French diplomat who held foreign postings in Egypt and Italy and also worked for the Foreign Ministry in Paris. In 1854 he became Ambassador to Prussia. In 1866, the Austro-Prussian War broke out, and during the critical weeks which followed the attempt of Napoleon to intervene between Prussia and Austria, he accompanied the Prussian headquarters in the advance on Vienna.

Foreign princes who undertake to govern Balkan States, however, often have to put up with worse things than unpalatable truths, and the conduct of Prince Charles and his advisers with reference to the question of investiture was of a nature which not only justified strong language, but necessitated strong pressure from France and England. After bargaining and haggling for several months, and obtaining all sorts of concessions from the Porte, the Roumanians actually proposed that "in order to meet existing difficulties" the Prince should be invested at Constantinople without any conditions at all. The chief stumbling block appears to have the phrase "*partie intégrante*,"[124] in the Declaration, and it was not until it had been made clear that neither France nor England

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would recognize the Prince unless this condition was complied with that the sacramental words were agreed to. Eventually more reasonable views prevailed at Bucharest, and Prince Charles at last proceeded to Constantinople for the ceremony of Investiture. The Turks, as is their wont, received him with great courtesy, and the impression he created was of the most favourable kind, the only person who exhibited dissatisfaction being the Russian Minister.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Green.
Therapia, Nov. 1, 1866.

> The Prince will, I suppose, arrive at Bucharest two or three days before this reaches you. I hope he is satisfied with his visit to Constantinople. There was some hitch about the interchange of civilities with the Russian Minister and one or two other chiefs of missions, I believe. I suppose however all was set right before His Highness went away. The Prince himself showed, I thought, great good sense in these matters of etiquette as well as in more important matters. I should be glad if you would take an opportunity of letting him understand discreetly that I personally was thoroughly satisfied, not that he can doubt it.

The Principalities Question having been satisfactorily settled, M. de Moustier, who, in the meanwhile, had become Minister for Foreign affairs, lost no time in claiming all the credit for himself. With his usual good sense, Lord Lyons showed complete indifference to the egotism of his former colleague.

> 'It is the way of French diplomatists everywhere, and of almost all diplomatists at Pera, to take to themselves the credit of every good thing that has been done," he wrote to Lord Cowley, "so far as

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> the Turks are concerned. I have borne in mind what you told me in Paris of your own system of dealing with them, and have endeavoured to let them have the credit of their good deeds, whatever part I may have had in bringing them about. M. de Moustier has certainly not followed the same plan. His article in the *Moniteur* gives no credit either to the Turks or to me. Whatever may be our relative shares in settling the questions, it cannot be doubted that if I had chosen from jealousy, or any other motive, to thwart him, I could easily have done so. However, if good is done, I am willing to forego my share of the boasting."

[124] Integral part.

CHAPTER V. CONSTANTINOPLE

It is hardly necessary to state that the semi-comic question of the Principalities was but one of many difficulties threatening in every part of the Turkish Empire, from the Fortress of Belgrade to the Lebanon. The long letter to Lord Stanley of December 19 is one which, with slight variations, might have been written by every British Ambassador at Constantinople at any time during the last fifty years, but is quoted in full because it seems to constitute a comprehensive review of the condition of Turkey at the close of 1866; and it is perhaps worthy of note, as showing how completely the politics of Europe have changed, that the gigantic struggle between Prussia and Austria passed unnoticed and without producing the slightest apparent effect in the Near East.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley.
Constantinople, Dec. 19, 1866.

> I am afraid that it is only too true that a storm is brewing in the East. There is a very apparent change in the policy of Russia, or at least, in that of her agents in Turkey. When I arrived a year ago there was every appearance of a desire on the part of Russia to keep things quiet in Turkey. Now her

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> agents make no secret of their sympathy with the Cretan insurrection and with Christian malcontents throughout the Empire and appear to be determined to recover their old position as the special friends and protectors of all the Orthodox Christians, and to be willing enough to see troubles and disturbances break out in all directions. Greece is bent upon mischief, and the question whether we are or are not to have an Eastern Question forced upon us in the spring depends upon whether or no Greece can be kept in order. All this suits the Russian game. If we interfere to bring the Hellenes to their senses, she hopes to recover her lost popularity at our expense. If we do not, she will claim the merit of having hindered us.
>
> I cannot make up my mind to recommend the Turks to take a bold course. Discouraging as is the spectacle afforded by the Turkish army and navy in Crete, I think it probable that the Turks would in the end get the better of the Hellenes if they were allowed to deal with them without any interference from Europe. But Europe undoubtedly would interfere. I very much dread the effects of allowing the Greeks to get up disturbances in this country in the spring. If the disturbances are very serious they will probably lead to the destruction of Ottoman rule in Europe. What will take its place it is impossible to foresee, but I think it is pretty clear that the Turks will not go without a desperate struggle, and that in mixed districts we shall have massacres and every kind of horror. Great calamities may possibly be avoided if we can keep the Turks going and make them go on tolerably well for some years longer. If they are really capable of radical improvement, if they can live upon equal terms with the Christians, and establish a good government, so much the better. If things go on as they have done lately, the Turks will be gradually squeezed out, as the Americans say, by the increase in numbers, wealth and intelligence of the Christians. I am not one of those who look upon the Turkish Empire as good *per se*—to be upheld at all hazards—but in the interest of all parties, I should like to let it down gently; but in order to make this possible, the Turks must be prudent and behave well to all their subjects.

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> The arguments against giving up the Fortress of Belgrade are strongly put in Mr. Longworth's[125] despatch to me of which he has sent you a copy. For my own part I doubt whether the *Levée en masse*[126] of the Mussulman population of Turkey to defend it, would not shake the Empire to pieces. In the face of the extreme unpopularity of the Sultan personally and of the Government with the Mussulmans, I doubt whether the Ministers would be willing to risk an appeal to them. The same state of things however makes the Ministers very fearful of the effect of giving up the Fortress. It seems that Europe will advise the Porte to abandon it, and this, I am inclined to think, is the proper advice for Europe to give. I do not think that it is advice which it would be fair to press very strongly unless (as is by no means impossible) the Porte may wish to be able to say to the Sultan and the people that they were obliged to yield to all Europe united against them on the point. I don't think that England, or any other power, should encourage the Porte to hold out, unless of course it were deemed to be a matter of such importance that material aid would be given to help the Porte out of any scrape into which its holding out might bring it. On the other hand, unless we were prepared to do this and to do it effectually, we should make ourselves unnecessarily odious to the Christian races, and neither obtain nor deserve any gratitude from the Turks, if we alone advised them to keep the Fortress. Aali Pasha does not talk as if he had any idea of yielding. His plan will probably be to say neither yes nor no, unless circumstances compel him to give a categorical answer to the Servians.[127]

Lord Stanley, who at this period ruled at the Foreign Office, was not an optimist by nature, had no illusions about the future of Turkey, and his letters contain references to many other questions which appeared likely to create trouble in Europe; besides Crete and the Fortress of Belgrade. With regard to the latter he observed that

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the "Turks have the same right to stay there that every one has to do foolish things where only his own interest is concerned." "The Austrians," he wrote in October, "have made their greatest mistake of this year (which is saying a good deal) in the choice of Beust[128] as Minister"

"The general impression is that Bismark[129] (*sic*) will not be able to hold power, from the state of his health. I do not envy the King of Prussia left alone to carry out plans which he probably has

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[125] Consul General John Augustus Longworth (died 1875) is mentioned in diplomatic letters on Crete as reported on the Digital Library of Modern Greek Studies. https://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/metadata/f/d/f/metadata-1610107981-618304-26987.tkl

[126] Mass uprising

[127] Serbia was frequently called Servia at this period.

[128] Count Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust (German: Friedrich Ferdinand Graf von Beust; 13 January 1809 – 24 October 1886) was a German and Austrian statesman. As an opponent of Otto von Bismarck, he attempted to conclude a common policy of the German middle states between Austria and Prussia.

[129] It used to be said that it took a Franco-German war to secure the correct spelling of this name. It is certainly a curious fact that another Foreign Secretary also used to spell it incorrectly. (LN). Otto Eduard Leopold, Prince of Bismarck, Count of Bismarck-Schönhausen, Duke of Lauenburg (born Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck-Schönhausen; 1 April 1815 – 30 July 1898) was a German statesman and diplomat who oversaw the unification of Germany and served as its first chancellor from 1871 to 1890.

never understood and to face a German Parliament which he only consented to call in reliance on his adviser's capacity to manage it."

Another letter refers to a contemplated visit of the Prince of Wales to St. Petersburg, and, in view of "his strong anti-Turkish opinions of which he makes no secret," points out that care should be taken to explain to the Russian Government that H.R.H. did not represent the opinions of the Cabinet.

Other communications from the same Minister mention that the Americans had revived the *Alabama* claims "in a friendly and temperate manner," and there are many allusions to the disquieting symptoms in France. "I hear," he wrote in November, "that the one idea of everybody, high and low, in France is that the country is defenceless (with 600,000 soldiers), and that the lowest estimate of the necessary force laid before the commission now sitting involves an addition of 400,000 more. They have so long been used in that country to be surrounded by weak states that the mere neighbourhood of an equal is regarded by them as a threat."

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In the beginning of 1867 one difficulty was cleared out of the way, for Lord Stanley having formally tendered his advice, the Turkish Government consented to evacuate the Fortress of Belgrade. This unusual display of good sense was all the more creditable on account of the terror which Sultan Abdul Aziz inspired in his ministers; but the protracted insurrection in Crete constituted not only a danger, but also a fertile source of intrigues amongst Foreign Powers.

Lord Stanley took the matter-of-fact view that Greece had estranged British sympathy through financial immorality; and he was probably correct, for in the case of Turkey, it was not until the repudiation of her debts, that there was much fulmination against the iniquities of Ottoman rule.

"Opinion here is undecided about the Cretan quarrel," wrote this prosaic nobleman, who is credited with having himself refused the throne of Greece. "Nobody much believes in the Turks, but the old Phil-Hellenism is dead, and cannot be revived. Greece is too much associated in the English mind with unpaid debts and commercial sharp practice to command the sympathy that was felt thirty years ago. And now that questions of more interest and nearer home are being discussed, Crete will drop out of men's minds."

A little later, the French Government suddenly and quite unexpectedly proposed the cession of Crete to Greece; and this violent change in the policy hitherto pursued, rendered difficult joint action on the part of England and France with regard to Turkey. The original idea underlying French policy had been that the two Governments

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should force certain reforms upon the Porte, more particularly with regard to encouraging public works to be undertaken by foreign capitalists, and that the Turks should be made prosperous in spite of themselves. The difficulty in carrying out this beneficent programme consisted in the fact that there were no means of influencing the daily details of administration upon which its execution and success depended, and it seemed highly probable that the joint guardianship of England and France might degenerate into a struggle between the two Embassies for personal influences in

making and unmaking governors and ministers, to say nothing of the danger of the perpetration of gigantic jobs under the guise of giving public works to foreign capitalists. Nor, of course, was the Turkish Government in possession of funds to carry out any programme whatever.

Lord Stanley refused to entertain the French proposal with regard to Crete, and advanced much the same reasons as those probably brought forward more than forty years later.

Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 21, 1867.

> The Eastern Question remains where it was. France has certainly not dropped her idea of urging the cession of Crete. I have distinctly refused to join in this advice, as you will see by my despatch. The Russians seem jealous of French interference, though they cannot object, as it is in the sense of their often expressed opinions. The Italian Government shows an inclination to take part in the discussion, but rather, as I conceive, for the purpose of asserting its position as a first-rate power than with any definite idea of what it wants. Indeed, I think I trace in Italy a feeling of jealousy of the increase of the Greek power, lest Greece should become a troublesome neighbour and rival.

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> The chief event which is interesting the diplomatic world at the present moment is a report—not wholly unfounded as I believe—of the cession of Luxemburg by Holland to France. Prussia will resent it (if it comes to pass) and Belgium will not be the happier for being thus partly surrounded by French territory.

The Emperor (who had probably abandoned the control of his Eastern policy to M. de Moustier) received a warning from Lord Cowley.

Lord Cowley to Lord Lyons
Paris, March 22, 1867

> I found Moustier on my return a very different man from what I had left him, in respect to Turkey, but I had, a few days after my arrival, a conversation with the Emperor in which I warned him of the dangerous game he was playing in hastening the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, which could only turn to the profit of Russia, and I think that H.M. sees the matter in this light now and that he has desired Moustier to hold his hand and not forestall events. I fear however that things cannot go on much longer in Turkey as they are. The great matter now should be to educate the Christians for the emancipation which awaits them, by giving the outlying provinces as much autonomy as possible, but it "will be a bitter pill for the Turks to swallow."
>
> There is no particular news here—fresh irritation against Prussia, which will become dangerous if it does not die out before next year.

The vagary on the part of the French Government produced much confusion amongst the diplomatists at Constantinople, who all came to the British Ambassador with such different stories of what one had done, of

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what another was going to do, and of what a third would not do, that he eventually became as much puzzled as any one else, and adopted an attitude of strict neutrality.

The following letter to Lord Stanley is of interest for various reasons. It expresses the deliberate opinion of an exceptionally impartial man upon Russian policy towards Turkey, and there are references in it for the first time to two new factors in the Eastern Question, *viz*. the Bulgarians and the Young Turks.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Constantinople, April 10, 1867

> The Turks stand at bay for the moment. They have sent Omar Pasha[130] to Crete and are confident that he will reduce the island to submission. If he fails to do so in a reasonable time, they must confess that the task is too hard for them and leave the settlement of the question to the European Powers. France has played the game of Russia and apparently has not succeeded after all in satisfying her. She has brought Turkey nearer to ruin than it has yet been. It all forwards the policy of Russia, which is to keep Turkey unquiet, to prevent any approach to conciliation between Turks and Christians, to keep up a constant drain on the finances—in short, to have the country entirely at its mercy whenever circumstances render it convenient to seize it. Aali Pasha and Fuad Pasha both assure me that the dividends due in July on the foreign loans will be punctually paid; but, with the best intentions, the Porte will not be able to pay its foreign dividends much longer, if it is obliged to keep a large force on a war footing on the frontier of Greece; and to provide against insurrections excited from abroad in other quarters. The Bulgarians appear to oppose a strong *vis inertiæ*[131] to the Russian and Hellenic attempts to induce them to use and demand autonomy. Their principal quarrel is with the Greek clergy foisted upon them by the Patriarchate here. I have not been able to form a

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> positive opinion on their demands for a separate Patriarch of their own, but I incline to think that the Porte would do well to grant it. Russia now urges that the Bulgarians should have a civil representative instead, but this would come very near to autonomy.
>
> The discontent among the Mussulmans is very great. It is particularly so at Constantinople, where the employees of the Government form an important class, and where in

[130] Omer Pasha, also known as Omer Pasha Latas (24 September 1806 – 18 April 1871) was an Ottoman field marshal and governor. Born in the Austrian Empire to Serbian Orthodox Christian parents, he initially served as an Austrian soldier. When faced with charges of embezzlement, he fled to Ottoman Bosnia in 1823 and converted to Islam; he then joined the Ottoman army, where he quickly rose through the ranks. Latas crushed several rebellions all across the Ottoman Empire.
[131] Force of inertia.

> consequence of the non-payment of salaries, they, and all who live by them, are reduced to the greatest distress. The "Jeune Turquie"[132] party is produced partly by this and partly by the desire of Mustapha Fazyl Pasha[133] and others to oust Fuad and Aali and to take their places.
>
> Reports from the Consuls on the treatment of the Christians will have been pouring in upon you. The greater part of the grievances of the Christians are the results of bad government and bad administration of justice, and affect Mussulmans and Christians alike. Their peculiar grievances are their practical exclusion from the high offices of the State, the rejection in many cases of their evidence in the Law Courts, and what is most intolerable, the position in which they stand socially and politically with regard to the Turks. The Turks will not look upon them as equals and cannot trust them. In fact the Christians cannot feel loyalty to the Government because they are not trusted and employed; and they cannot be trusted and employed because they are not loyal to the Government. It is a perfect example of a vicious circle. It is useless to deny that the position of a Christian subject of the Porte is a humiliating position, and it is vain to expect that within any reasonable time the Christians will look upon the existing Government as anything but an evil to be endured or possibly even upheld as a less evil than revolution, but nothing more.

It will be realized from this instructive letter that however bad the Turkish Government, it had to contend with obstacles which are not encountered by other countries, and that in reality it never had a fair chance, although it

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is only just to add that when a real chance did occur, upon the overthrow of Abdul Hamid, in 1908, the opportunity was deliberately thrown away.

The Turks, however, had sufficient sense to concede the Bulgarian demand for a separate church, and by thus affecting a schism between the latter and the Greeks, succeeded in prolonging their hold over Macedonia for a longer period than would otherwise have been the case.

Meanwhile Lord Stanley had been thinking of other matters, and the allusions to Alaska and to Canada in the letter of April 4, afford a delightful instance of the light in which British statesmen viewed Colonial questions at that period.

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[132] The Young Turks formed as a constitutionalist broad opposition-movement in the late Ottoman Empire against the absolutist régime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (reigned 1876–1909).

[133] Mustafa Fazıl Pasha (20 February 1830 – 2 December 1875) was an Ottoman-Egyptian prince of ethnic Albanian descent belonging to the Muhammad Ali Dynasty founded by his grandfather Muhammad Ali Pasha. He was born in Cairo the third son of Ibrahim Pasha. On January 18, 1863, Prince Mustafa became the heir apparent to his brother Isma'il Pasha but on May 28, 1866, Ismail paid the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz to issue a firman so that the succession became by a direct male line of the reigning Khedive (viceroy) instead of passing from brother to brother. In protest of this decision, Mustafa Fazl Pasha left Egypt for Paris, where he patronized the Young Ottomans opposition against the Sultan Abdulaziz. He was appointed Ottoman minister for education in 1862, minister for finance in 1864 and 1869, and minister for justice from 1871 until 1872.

Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, April 4, 1867.

The Eastern Question has left us quiet during the last ten days. I hear nothing more of the proposed cession of Crete, and I suspect the French have found out that they had been going a little too fast and too far.

> The Luxemburg business has monopolized attention. Holland was willing to sell the Grand Duchy if the consent of Prussia could be secured, and France wished and wishes to buy, but Prussia steadily refuses. Holland dares not act without Bismarck's permission, and for the moment the plan seems to have fallen through. But the Emperor cannot afford a fresh defeat, and I fear we have not seen the end of the transaction. There is an almost universal expectation of war.
>
> The Americans, as you will see, have bought a large amount of worthless[134] territory from Russia at a nominal price. Their motive is probably twofold: to establish a sort of claim in the future to British

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> North America, lying as it does between their old and their new possessions; and to gain a victory over us by doing without our knowledge an act which they probably think will annoy England. In that expectation they will be disappointed, for I cannot find any one who cares about the matter, and the press in general treats it with indifference. It is true that in Canada the feeling may be different.

The Luxemburg difficulty (which had the effect of producing a temporary rapprochement between France and Russia with regard to the Eastern Question) was settled by a conference in London, and letters from Lord Stanley and others show that war was narrowly averted, and that the French were not ungrateful for the action of the British Government.

> "We have been too busy at home to have much leisure for Eastern affairs," wrote Lord Stanley. "The success of the Conference in keeping the peace was not, I think, expected by the general public and has given proportionate satisfaction, more perhaps here than elsewhere, and more in France than in Russia. The Emperor dreaded the idea of war and would have accepted almost any terms. The Prussians, being prepared and knowing that the French were not so, professed great indifference as to the result of the negotiations. Many still say that the inevitable quarrel is only postponed. It may be so, but I am inclined to think that in such matters to gain time is to gain everything. Irritation subsides, new questions arise to divert attention, and the opinion of the country has time to declare itself. I am told that at Paris the feeling of gratitude to England is general and strong."

In May, in spite of Crete, it was arranged that Sultan Abdul Aziz should pay a visit to France, and both the French and Turks, unlike Lord Russell, whose opinion on the value of such visits has been already quoted,

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[134] Alaska.

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thought that it would be productive of great results. The Turks were especially delighted, because they thought the invitation a proof that France would not persist in the alliance with Russia which had been so perilous to the Ottoman Empire. It was hoped that if France could be brought back to her old attitude of co-operation with England in deprecating foreign aggression, things might be kept quiet, and that the internal situation might improve. The recent pro-Russian proclivities of Napoleon III. had drawn upon him some very sharp remonstrances from Her Majesty's Government, and a despatch from Lord Cowley shows that the Emperor had to put up with some remarkably plain speaking. He was told by the British Ambassador that if he would devote a little more attention to Eastern affairs he would probably refrain from constant intervention in the internal affairs of Turkey, unless indeed he wished to see that Empire collapse; and when he attempted feebly to explain that Russia deserved some satisfaction for her pride wounded by the result of the Crimean War, and that the best method of restraining her aggressive proceedings was to act in conjunction with her, he was informed that the best way of meeting insidious Russian policy was by honest and open opposition. It must doubtless have been extremely irritating to the British Government to see this disposition to fritter away the effects of the policy which led to the Crimean War, and the probability is that the Emperor had no definite idea as to what he wanted and was merely drifting along, in his usual manner, without realizing the possible results.

> "I fancy," said Lord Lyons, "that great efforts will be made to please and astonish the Sultan in France

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> and to impress him with the power of the country. He is not stupid or bigoted, but he has had very little education. He is more amiable than he looks. He speaks only Turkish. His hobby is the Navy and the way for us to impress him would be to show him as many ships, and particularly ironclads, as we can—that is to say if we can show as many or more than the French. He is Oriental enough to expect hospitality, as he practises it here, and I suppose he would be much hurt by any etiquette which he thought a slight. Politically, I think a visit from him to England would be a good thing if we received him personally as well as the French did. As he has taken up the idea of going to England, he would of course be very much mortified at not being cordially received, and advantage would be taken of anything of the kind by the enemies of Turkey here to weaken his and our position. I suggested to Fuad Pasha to let the question of his visit to England be still, until I could communicate with you about it, but I understand he has telegraphed to Musurus to speak to you. I suppose the Sultan, of whom they all seem as much afraid as if he still cut off heads, ordered him to do so and he dared not object. I believe the Sultan will not leave Constantinople till he has made quite sure of not finding the Emperor of Russia at Paris. Fuad says he will take a very small suite, but I suppose it will be a larger suite than a European Sovereign would have. I believe he will take a sort of noble guard he has, who wear very picturesque costumes of different parts of the Empire: there used to be fifty of them, but I hardly suppose all will go."

It very soon became evident that the Sultan was quite determined to go to England, and it was clearly desirable that he should be received with no less distinction and ceremony than in France. In a courtly manner he conveyed to the Ambassador that he would be deeply mortified if he were

not given the opportunity of paying his respects personally to Queen Victoria, and his ministers laid great stress upon the desirability of His Majesty

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being received by the Lord Mayor, the importance of that magnate standing apparently as high in the estimation of the Oriental as of the Frenchman. The mingled pleasure, alarm, and agitation evoked by the Sultan's intended visit are well illustrated by the following letter to Lord Lyons from a man who seemed marked out to add to the gaiety of nations, Mr. Hammond.

Mr. Hammond to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, May 30, 1867.

> We should like to know as soon as possible at what time we may calculate on seeing the Sultan and what members of his family or of his Government he brings with him, and the rank and description of his suite and their numbers. It is to be hoped they will not be too numerous, and that as he is to be lodged in the Palace, the usual habits of Orientalism will for the time be laid aside and the services of his Harem be dispensed with during his visit. It would shock the people in this country to hear of the Sultan being attended by persons not proper to be mentioned in civilized society, and no small inconvenience might result if he was known to have slaves in his suite, for it would be impossible to answer for the enthusiasts of Exeter Hall[135] with so fair an opportunity before them for displaying their zeal and doing mischief.
>
> Aali Pasha has, I think, been in England, and you might have means of bringing these little matters before him in such a delicate way as not to shock the Sultan's ideas of propriety or mastery. The French probably would not be so particular in these respects, but they have not Writs of Habeas Corpus dangling before their eyes, nor unrestricted liberty of speech and print to provide against.
>
> Whatever information you can give us of the Sultan's habits of living and of the sort of accommodation he will require will be very acceptable to the Lord Chamberlain's office, and any hints as to what it would most interest him to see would be valuable.

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> In London, you know, we have no manufactories, but there are the Arsenal at Woolwich; the large private shipbuilding yards in the Thames, if he did not care to go to Portsmouth for a day; the Museum, Bank, Post Office and some few things of that sort which are probably peculiar in their extent to this country. It might also interest him, if he is a reformer, to see our prisons, from which he might take useful hints. Does he keep reasonable hours, and would he be shocked at balls, or restrain himself from throwing a handkerchief at any beauty that might cross his path?

[135] Exeter Hall was a large public meeting place on the north side of the Strand in central London, opposite where the Savoy Hotel now stands. From 1831 until 1907, Exeter Hall was the venue for many great gatherings of activists for various causes, most notably the anti-slavery movement and the meeting of the Anti–Corn Law League in 1846

Sultan Abdul Aziz's visit to England passed off without administering any of those shocks to public feeling which Mr. Hammond contemplated with so much alarm. There are no means of ascertaining what precise effects were produced upon the Sultan's mind, but it is to be presumed that the object lesson afforded by an English prison was wasted upon him, for anything more unlike an English prison than a Turkish gaol it would be difficult to imagine. The ill-fated Abdul Aziz was accompanied on this journey by his young nephew, destined to become famous subsequently as Abdul Hamid II.[136], but he, too, has kept his impressions to himself, and the only topic upon which he has been known to expatiate, is the excellence of English servants, who "always treated him in a fatherly manner."

In the meanwhile Lord Lyons's stay at Constantinople was drawing to a close, for at the end of April, Lord Stanley had offered him the Embassy at Paris. The offer was made in highly flattering terms, the Foreign Secretary expressing his regret at withdrawing the Ambassador from an important post, the duties of which he so thoroughly understood, but adding that Paris was the first place in the diplomatic service, and that the Eastern

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Question seemed likely to be superseded by even more serious difficulties nearer home. It is probable that the honour was all the more appreciated because it was unsolicited and unexpected, as shown by the following letter from him to Lord Cowley.

Lord Lyons to Lord Cowley
Constantinople, May 8, 1867.

> When I first heard that you were likely to give up Paris, I felt, as I think I said in my letter to you, alarmed at the prospect of the Embassy's falling into other hands. I should have been indeed alarmed had I then known into what hands it was likely to fall. I received on the 3rd a letter from Lord Stanley offering it to me. I have accepted in deference to my father's often repeated injunction never to refuse promotion, but I confess I am full of misgivings and anxieties. I had heard nothing whatever from the Foreign Office till I received Lord Stanley's letter last week.

The appointment, when it became known publicly, was generally approved, and no one wrote in warmer terms of congratulation than Lord Clarendon, who had been Lord Stanley's predecessor at the Foreign Office, and who stated that he had himself suggested Lord Lyons to his successor as the most suitable man for the post.

Thus, at the comparatively early age of fifty he had attained the highest place in the British diplomatic service.

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[136] Abdülhamid II or Abdul Hamid II (21 September 1842 – 10 February 1918) was the 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire, from 1876 to 1909, and the last sultan to exert effective control over the fracturing state. He oversaw a period of decline with rebellions (particularly in the Balkans), and presided over an unsuccessful war with the Russian Empire (1877–78), the loss of Egypt, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Tunisia, and Thessaly from Ottoman control (1877–1882), followed by a successful war against Greece in 1897, though Ottoman gains were tempered by subsequent Western European intervention.

CHAPTER V. CONSTANTINOPLE

As regards Lord Lyons's two years occupation of the Constantinople Embassy, it has already been pointed out that the period was one of comparative calm, and that there were no sensational questions to be dealt with. Unlike some of his predecessors and successors, he had not been instructed to make any change in the policy pursued by the British Government towards Turkey, and it had not fallen to his lot to be forced to adopt a

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threatening and aggressive attitude. Consequently, his experiences of Constantinople were agreeable and unexciting; his relations with the Turkish Ministers and with his colleagues had been singularly amicable, and he left the place with regret. It would be affectation to claim that his stay there left any permanent mark upon our policy in the East, but there were two minor matters in which his influence made itself felt. Entertaining a profound dislike to intrigue and tortuous methods, he made it his business to diminish as much as possible the so-called Dragoman system and to substitute for it a different and more open method of transacting the business of the Embassy. The other matter related to the practice of extorting favours and concessions from the Porte. It has always been the tradition of British diplomacy in the East, and it may perhaps be said to be unique in this respect, that the influence of the Ambassador should not be used to procure concessions, honours, or favours on behalf of British subjects. Upon this point he carried the principle of abstention to almost extravagant lengths, as the following incident shows. The daughter of a gentleman connected with the Embassy was about to be married, and the newspaper *La Turquie* announced that the Sultan had sent a magnificent present. The announcement caught the eye of the vigilant ambassador, who immediately wrote to the father:

> I think you will do well to take steps to remove the unfavourable impression which this paragraph cannot but make. There can be little if any difference between such a present and one made directly to yourself; and the most friendly course I can take is to advise you to prevent the acceptance of it, and to have a paragraph inserted in the *Turquie* explaining that it has not been retained.

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This must have been singularly unpleasant for all parties, and it is quite likely that the Ambassador found himself morally bound to compensate the lady by making an equally magnificent present as a substitute for the Sultan's rejected gift.

An application to support a concession to Mr. Brassey for the construction of a railway from Constantinople to Adrianople met with no favour at all. He explained that he was constantly applied to in order to support all sorts of concessions for railways and similar undertakings, and that his practice was to reply that it was not his business to meddle in such matters unless instructed to do so by the Foreign Office, and that concessionaires should therefore in the first place address themselves to the Home Government. "The fact is that there is often much dirty work connected with the management of such matters at the Porte, and I wish to be clear of them." Over and over again there appears in his letters the emphatic statement that he "refuses to take part in the dirty work by which European speculators are apt to get concessions out of the Turks."

It would not be difficult to find arguments against this attitude, which in these days of increased international competition it would be impossible rigidly to maintain, but the views which prevailed

fifty years ago with regard to the abstention of British diplomacy from every species of concession mongering probably did more than anything else to inspire Orientals with a belief in our integrity as a nation.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND EMPIRE. (1867-1869)

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Lord Lyons, accompanied by Malet and Sheffield, whom he had again been permitted to retain on his staff, entered upon his duties at Paris in October, 1867, and there he remained until within a few months of his death, some twenty years later. He arrived at a time when, although the outward splendour of the Empire still dazzled the popular imagination, the prestige, influence, and popularity of the Imperial Government, and more especially of the Emperor himself, had suffered a series of disastrous shocks. If Napoleon III.'s career had ended in 1862 he would presumably have left a great name in history and a record of brilliant successes; after that period, however, everything seemed to go wrong for him. Poland, the Danish War, and the Austro-Prussian War had shown that his pretension to control the policy of Europe had practically vanished; the incomprehensible Mexican enterprise had ended in disaster and disgrace, and to add to these glaring failures in foreign policy there was deep-seated discontent at home. In the autumn of 1867 a fresh embarrassment to France was created by the

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action of Garibaldi,[137] who succeeded in embroiling two Governments which had latterly been on most friendly terms. The alliance between Italy and Prussia in 1866 had been a temporary expedient only; the sympathies of Victor Emmanuel had always been on the side of France, and when at the close of that year, the Emperor decided upon the withdrawal of his troops from Rome, it seemed not improbable that a permanent alliance between Italy and France might be effected. This combination was defeated by the action of Garibaldi in invading the Papal States, and the Emperor, dominated by the clerical party, found himself compelled not only to use threatening language towards the Italian Government, but to send a French expedition to re-occupy Rome and defend the Pope against his enemies. Mentana[138] was the result, and it soon became plain that the policy of the French Government was to prevent Italy from obtaining possession of Rome, M. Rouher,[139] the French Prime Minister, at a subsequent period going so far as to declare that France would never tolerate such an outrage on its honour. In spite of all this, signs were not wanting that there was no desire on the part of either France or Italy to go to war. Mentana had cleared the air, and the chief danger seemed to consist in the renewed French occupation of Rome. As Lord Stanley pointed out, it was comparatively easy for the Emperor to go to Rome, but the difficulty lay in getting out again, for who was to keep order after the evacuation? Napoleon III. had, in fact, released himself from momentary embarrassments at the cost of heavy trouble in the future. In accordance with his favourite practice, he now made the proposal that the so-called Roman Question should be submitted to a Conference of

[137] Giuseppe Maria Garibaldi (4 July 1807 – 2 June 1882) was an Italian general, revolutionary and republican. He contributed to Italian unification (Risorgimento) and the creation of the Kingdom of Italy.
[138] Mentana is a town located in the region of Lazio in central Italy.
[139] Eugène Rouher (30 November 1814 – 3 February 1884) was a French statesman of the Second Empire.

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the Powers at Paris—a proposal which did not commend itself to England, and was opposed by Prussia at the instigation of Bismarck, whose object it was to accentuate the differences between France and Italy. To what extent the Empress Eugénie participated in the direction of French foreign policy has often been the subject of discussion, but there can be no doubt that she held decided views with regard to the Roman Question and the proposed Conference.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, Nov. 11, 1867.

After I had presented the Queen's letter this morning, the Empress kept me in conversation for an hour. She began by expressing in warm terms respect and affection for the Queen and in particular gratitude for Her Majesty's kind reception of her at the last visit.

The Empress proceeded to speak of the Roman question and insisted strongly on the necessity for a Conference and on the importance and propriety of non-Catholic as well as Catholic powers taking part in it. She expressed a very strong desire that England should not stand aloof.

Without taking upon myself to anticipate your decision on the matter, I endeavoured to make the Empress aware of the very great difficulty and delicacy of a Conference to us. It appeared to result from that. Her Majesty said that, in her own opinion, the proper basis for the deliberations would be the maintenance of the *status quo*. This, she seemed to think, would be a fair compromise between the demand of the Pope[140] that all the provinces he had lost should be restored to him and the pretensions of Italy to Rome itself.

The conversation having been brought round to the measures to be taken immediately, I endeavoured to impress upon the Empress the advantage of withdrawing the troops without a day's unnecessary delay, if not from the Roman territory altogether, at least from Rome itself. Her Majesty

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said that there was nothing in principle against withdrawing to Civita Vecchia at once, and that certainly the Emperor and she herself were anxious to bring all the troops back to France as soon as it was safe to do so.

The Empress spoke discouragingly of the state of Italy—of the little progress that had been made towards uniting and assimilating the various sections of the population—of the financial difficulties and other unfavourable points. She said however that the unity of

[140] Pope Pius IX (born Giovanni Maria Battista Pietro Pellegrino Isidoro Mastai-Ferretti; 13 May 1792 – 7 February 1878) was head of the Catholic Church from 1846 to 1878 . His reign of nearly 32 years is the longest verified of any pope in history. He was notable for convoking the First Vatican Council in 1868 which defined the dogma of papal infallibility before taking a break in summer of 1870. The council never reconvened. At the same time, France started the French-Prussian War and removed the troops that protected the Papal States, which allowed the Capture of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy on 20 September 1870.

Italy had been the work of the Emperor, and that it would be absurd and disadvantageous to allow it to be destroyed. She believed that the French expedition had in reality been of as much or more service to King Victor Emmanuel[141] than to the Pope. His Majesty's throne was threatened, she thought, by the revolutionary party quite as much as was the Temporal power of the Pope.

Among a great variety of topics which came up, the Empress spoke, by way of an illustration, of the Kingdom of Greece. She said it had been a mistake, if that Kingdom was to be created at all, not to give it territory enough to enable it to exist. She did not however seem to think it would be advisable at this moment to make over Crete or any other Ottoman province to Greece. She appeared to be aware of the extreme peril to the whole Ottoman Empire of detaching any portion of it in this way.

The Empress spoke with much grace both of manner and of expression, and I think with very great ability.

For my own part I endeavoured principally to make an impression on her mind respecting the immediate withdrawal of the troops to Civita Vecchia at least, and I am inclined to think that I succeeded so far as to ensure the repeating to the Emperor what I said on this point.

I hear from all quarters that the Emperor's own position in France becomes more and more critical. Every one seems to admit that he could not do otherwise than send the expedition to Rome, but the success which attended it does not seem to have made much impression. All parties except the ultra-clerical appear to desire to get out of the intervention as soon as possible. So far as I can make out,

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the weakness of the Emperor's position lies simply in loss of prestige arising partly from his want of success on many recent occasions, and mainly, I imagine, from the inconstancy of men and Frenchmen in particular. In fact he has reigned eighteen years, and they are getting tired of so much of the same thing and want novelty.

Lord Stanley's comment upon this letter was that the Empress's "frank and sensible conversation" furnished the best reason he had received yet for keeping out of the affair altogether, and he observed with some justice that what Her Majesty's proposed compromise amounted to, was that the Pope should keep all that he had already, and merely renounce his claim to what, under no circumstances, he could ever hope to recover. The more he considered the proposed Conference the more hopeless it appeared to him. There was no plan, nothing settled, no assurance that there was even a wish for agreement amongst the Powers interested. They were being asked to discuss a question on which they were certain to differ, and the sole reason given for summoning a Conference was that the Emperor disliked bearing the responsibility which he had assumed. Why

[141] Victor Emmanuel II (Vittorio Emanuele Maria Alberto Eugenio Ferdinando Tommaso di Savoia; 14 March 1820 – 9 January 1878) was King of Sardinia (also informally known as Piedmont–Sardinia) from 23 March 1849 until 17 March 1861, when he assumed the title of King of Italy and became the first king of an independent, united Italy since the 6th century, a title he held until his death in 1878.

should we be asked to bear it for him? It must have been a congenial task for a man of Lord Stanley's temperament to throw cold water upon the vague and slipshod proposals of the unlucky Emperor, and he was probably fortified in his conclusions by the attitude of Prussia and by the reluctance of Russia, in spite of a Conference being "always a temptation to Gortschakoff."[142]

Another personage of some importance, Prince Napoleon, also held decided views upon the Roman question,

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which he imparted to the Ambassador in the hope that they would thus be brought before the Emperor.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, Nov. 15, 1867.

> I have had a long interview with Prince Napoleon[143] this afternoon. He does not desire that England should agree to the Conference. He thinks that the best service England could render to the Emperor would be to advise him to give up the idea of a Conference and settle the matter with Italy, by satisfying, at least in a certain measure, Italian aspirations. He declares that Italy will never be quiet, and that the unity of Italy will never be assured until she gets Rome for her capital. He believes that the Emperor's support of the Pope is very unpopular with the great majority of the French people, and that it will, if persevered in, be a serious danger to the dynasty. He takes a gloomy view altogether of the state of feeling in France, and thinks that the Emperor will not be able to hold his own, unless he abandons the system of personal government and gives a large increase of liberty. He wishes England to give this advice to the Emperor.
>
> He volunteered to say all this to me and entered into a great many details. He spoke with great animation and remarkably well.
>
> My share of the conversation was but small. I think the advice which the Prince wishes us to give to the Emperor would be sound in itself, but that it would produce no good effect, unless His Majesty felt that he was in a strait, and asked our opinion. I am myself very little inclined to thrust advice upon him out of season.

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[142] The vanity which was responsible for Prince Gortschakoff's love of conferences is frequently referred to in Busch's *Bismarck* (LN). Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov (15 July 1798 – 11 March 1883) was a Russian diplomat and statesman from the Gorchakov princely family. He has an enduring reputation as one of the most influential and respected diplomats of the mid-19th century.

[143] Prince Napoléon Joseph Charles Paul Bonaparte (9 September 1822 – 17 March 1891), usually called Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte or Jérôme Bonaparte, was the second son of Jérôme, King of Westphalia, youngest brother of Napoleon I. Following the death of his cousin Louis-Napoléon, Prince Imperial in 1879, he claimed headship of the House of Bonaparte until his death in 1891. An outspoken liberal however, he was passed over as heir in his cousin's final will, which instead chose his elder son Victor, who was favored by most Bonapartists. He was given the title of Prince Napoleon by his cousin Emperor Napoléon III in 1852.

Prince Napoleon on this and, as will be seen, on subsequent occasions, showed that his judgment was remarkably correct, but it is not probable that his Imperial cousin benefited by his sage advice, for Lord Stanley

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agreed that it was undesirable that the British Government should become the channel of his opinions. Both he and the Ambassador, however, thoroughly realized that the Emperor had no fixed plan, and was merely following his usual hand-to-mouth policy of staving off present at the cost of future embarrassments.

Napoleon's vague and unpractical views were exposed in a conversation with Lord Lyons, which apparently took place in a crowded ball-room. Asked what was to be the basis of the Conference, he made the cryptic reply: "*Mon Dieu! la base est d'assimiler le pouvoir du Pape à l'Italie*,"[144] which sounds like unadulterated nonsense; and when pressed to explain how an unpalatable decision was to be enforced upon a recalcitrant Pope, His Majesty was only able feebly to suggest *moral influence*. Nevertheless, he showed no ill-feeling, and, with habitual good nature, addressed no reproaches to the Ambassador with regard to the unsympathetic attitude of Her Majesty's Government. In spite of many rebuffs and discouragements, the Emperor and his ministers continued to labour on behalf of their ill-starred project with an energy worthy of a better cause; but circumstances were eventually too strong for them. The real opponent all along had been Prussia, and the aim of the Prussian Government was to throw the blame on to England. The French were well aware of the fact, and did not consequently display ill-will towards us, and it seems to have been the speech of M. Rouher, already referred to, which made it clear that a Conference would be little better than a waste of time; for when the Italians asked for an explanation they were informed that M. Rouher's speech only asserted more emphatically what had been said before. Meanwhile the

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French troops continued to remain at Rome, although King Victor Emmanuel complained bitterly to Lord Clarendon of their presence and declared that, should they be withdrawn, he would undertake that there should be no aggressive action against the Pope. The erroneous impression which influenced French policy with regard to the Papacy was explained in a letter to Lord Lyons from that acute observer, Mr. Odo Russell,[145] who was the British representative at Rome at the time.

[144] Good heavens! The basis is for the Pope to have power similar to that of Italy.
[145] Subsequently Lord Ampthill. (LN) Odo William Leopold Russell, 1st Baron Ampthill, GCB, GCMG, PC (20 February 1829 – 25 August 1884), styled Lord Odo Russell between 1872 and 1881, was a British diplomat and the first British Ambassador to the German Empire. His father was Major-General Lord George Russell, second son of the 6th Duke of Bedford. His uncle, 1st Earl Russell was twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Lyons
Rome, Dec. 10, 1867.

Cardinal Antonelli[146] constantly talks of you with affection and respect and often expresses his desire to see you again.

Many thanks for your letter of the 4th about a preliminary conference. Rouher's speech, I take it, has put an end to all that—at least so Cardinal Antonelli tells me—and the joy caused at the Vatican that France will never allow Italy to hold Rome is immense.

You are perfectly right in not thinking that the Court of Rome has changed since you were here.

French diplomatists and statesmen are but too apt to interpret the clear and precise language of the Court of Rome according to their own wishes and to think and proclaim that the Pope will adopt and follow the wise counsels of France, etc. etc.

Now I say, give the Pope his due, and at least give him credit for being consistent, whether you agree with him or not.

In the long run, an Italian priest will always outwit a French statesman, and no Frenchman can resist the influence of Rome. A year's residence suffices to make him more Papal than the Pope, whom he fondly believes to be a French institution under the immediate control of the French clergy.

I have often marvelled at French notions of the Papacy, and now it has grown the fashion to mistake

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the cause of the Pope for that of France, even among men who might know better.

A permanent French occupation is the only possible machinery by which the Temporal Power can be imposed on Italy. The national feeling against the Temporal Power is certainly much stronger than I myself thought in Italy, and the bitter hostility of the Romans has been proved by the hideous means employed by them to destroy life and property in the October conspiracy.

The accuracy of these views was sufficiently demonstrated in 1870.

Before the end of the year Prince Napoleon made another of his frequent appearances at the Embassy, and announced that he looked upon a war with Germany in the spring as certain. He considered that there were only two courses which could have been taken with prudence—the one

[146] Giacomo Antonelli (2 April 1806 – 6 November 1876) was an Italian Catholic prelate who served as Cardinal Secretary of State for the Holy See from 1848 until his death. He played a key role in Italian politics, resisting the unification of Italy and affecting Catholic interests in European affairs.

to resist the aggrandizement of Prussia immediately after Sadowa[147]—the other to accept it with favour; what had been done had merely caused so much irritation that France would eventually be forced into war. He denounced Thiers,[148] who, while pretending to advocate peace, was always crying out that France was being wronged and humiliated, and thought that even a successful war would be full of danger to the Empire. Apparently his own policy was to unite with Italy against the Pope and establish liberal institutions in France, a course which the Emperor had now rendered it impossible to adopt, as he had committed himself to the Pope, and was not likely to play the part of a Constitutional monarch after eighteen years of absolute power. "He speaks very well, and with a good deal of animation," wrote Lord Lyons, "and his opinions sound much better as he delivers them than they read as I write them." But, making

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every allowance for exuberant verbosity, this Prince seems to have held much sounder and more definite opinions than his Imperial relative.

Not long after Prince Napoleon came the Foreign Minister, M. de Moustier, with his story.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, Jan. 16, 1868.

> M. de Moustier says that the reports he receives from Berlin and other quarters confirm his impression that Prussia is averse to a war with France; that the relations between Austria and Prussia are improving, and that such being the case Prussia is awakening to a sense of the danger of Russian designs in Eastern Europe. On the other hand he says that Baron Brunnow[149] gives the most positive assurances that Russia will do nothing against Turkey. He trusts that these assurances may be depended upon, but he thinks that the Russian Government uses its ambassadors as screens, behind which to carry on its own manoeuvres.
>
> Nigra,[150] the Italian Minister here, tells me that his last news from Florence gives him strong hopes that the Menabrea[151] Ministry will maintain itself. I presume that the object

[147] The Battle of Königgrätz (or Sadowa) was the decisive battle of the Austro-Prussian War in which the Kingdom of Prussia defeated the Austrian Empire. It took place on 3 July 1866, near the Bohemian city of Hradec Králové (German: Königgrätz) and village of Sadová, now in the Czech Republic.
[148] Marie Joseph Louis Adolphe Thiers (15 April 1797 – 3 September 1877) was a French statesman and historian who served as President of France from 1871 to 1873. He was the second elected president and the first of the Third French Republic.
[149] Ernst Philipp Graf von Brunnow (31 August 1797, Dresden – 12 April 1875, Darmstadt) was a Baltic German diplomat who served in the Russian Empire. Brunnow represented Russia in several conferences, and held ambassadorial positions in London (1840–1854), Frankfurt (1855), Berlin (1856), and then returned to London (1858–1874).
[150] Lorenzo Annibale Costantino Nigra, Count of Villa Castelnuovo (11 June 1828 – 1 July 1907), was an Italian nobleman, philologist, poet, diplomat and politician. Among the several positions that he held and political and foreign affairs in which he was involved in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and Kingdom of Italy, he served as ambassador and was later appointed a member of the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy.
[151] Luigi Federico Menabrea (4 September 1809 – 24 May 1896), later made 1st Count Menabrea and 1st Marquess of Valdora, was an Italian statesman, general, diplomat, and mathematician who served as the seventh prime minister of Italy from 1867 to 1869.

of Italy should be to convince the Emperor that Rome will be safe without the French troops—I mean to make the Emperor himself really confident of it. This done, I suppose diplomacy is capable of devising some formal guarantees to satisfy the French public. I do not believe that France has as yet done more than hinted at some security that Italy will take her side, if she quarrels with Prussia. I do not know that she has even hinted at anything of the kind. A demand for an engagement of this sort would be unreasonable and probably futile. If France is ever hard pressed by Prussia, the Italians will go to Rome unless some other Powers step forward to bar the way. At all events, it will not be by promises extracted beforehand that they will be stopped.

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The real danger to Europe appears however to be in the difficulties of the Emperor Napoleon at home. The discontent is great and the distress amongst the working classes severe. The great measure of the session, the new Conscription Act, is very unpopular. There is no glitter at home or abroad to divert public attention, and the French have been a good many years without the excitement of a change. I think that Europe, and England in particular, are more interested in maintaining the Emperor, than in almost anything else.

The accuracy of this forecast, like that of Mr. Odo Russell, was also demonstrated in 1870, when, upon the retirement of the French garrison, the Italian troops marched into Rome, and the temporal power of the Pope came to an end. It is not, however, altogether fair to place the whole responsibility for the collapse of French policy in Italy upon Napoleon III., for whereas he was no doubt personally in favour of an united Italy; there was a strong party in France which was strongly opposed to it, and convinced that French interests lay in a divided country. The mention of Russia in the above letter makes the following remarkable communication not inappropriate.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, Jan. 22, 1868.

The Emperor told me last night that his Ambassador at St. Petersburg had had a curious conversation with the Emperor Alexander.[152]

The Emperor Alexander had, he said, asked the Ambassador whether the French Government were fully aware of the extent of the plot which was actively carried on for the destruction of all the monarchical governments in Europe, and the assassination of sovereigns and Royal families. After

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giving some details His Majesty had suggested to the Ambassador that the several Governments should communicate information to each other and unite their efforts to defend themselves.

[152] Alexander II (29 April 1818 – 13 March 1881)[a] was Emperor of Russia, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Finland from 2 March 1855 until his assassination in 1881. Alexander's most significant reform as emperor was the emancipation of Russia's serfs in 1861, for which he is known as Alexander the Liberator

> The Emperor Napoleon proceeded to tell me that it was asserted that the first and principal attempt was to be made in England; that the palaces and public buildings were to be blown up, and the Queen and Royal Family seized and put on board a steamer in the Thames and "disposed of." The Emperor Napoleon went on to say that the supposed details of the scheme to overthrow the Government of England were of course absurd, but he seemed to intend to suggest that we should be vigilant, and that he himself would be glad to co-operate with us. He said that Mazzini,[153] who had let him alone for some time, had now again taken up the idea of assassinating him, and was busily employed in making plans for effecting their purpose. He told me that Mazzini was very ill and he did not express any wish for his recovery.
>
> The Emperor talked to me a long time and related to me interesting anecdotes, some very amusing, of the conduct of various persons towards him in past times.

Cheap sensational magazines were not in existence in 1868, or one would be disposed to infer that the Emperor Alexander had been indulging in this species of literature, since it seems difficult otherwise to account for such credulity in high places. As for the Emperor Napoleon's anecdotes of his youth, they are unfortunately denied to the world, for the most distressing feature in Lord Lyons's correspondence is the almost complete absence of anything in the nature of indiscretions. The conversation, however, serves to show on what intimate terms he already stood with Napoleon III.

In the spring, letters received from Lord Stanley show that the British Government was feeling some uneasiness

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with regard to America, more especially in connection with the *Alabama* question, and, as now was frequently the case, Lord Lyons's advice was requested on various points. As to the general policy which should be pursued, he reiterated his former opinion that the chief danger consisted in the belief of the ordinary American politician that England would submit to anything rather than fight. Neither party would wish to have the responsibility of actually making war with England, but each party would very much like to be able to boast of having made her yield without fighting, and would vie with each other in calling for unreasonable concessions if they thought there was any chance of obtaining them. The best chance, therefore, of keeping the peace was to be very firm and uncompromising in questions of arrests and other measures necessary for putting down Fenianism,[154] as these were manifestly well grounded, and the rights of the same kind so frequently claimed and exercised by the Americans during the war had never been contested. In anything doubtful, we should be mild and conciliatory—not that mildness and conciliation would make

[153] Giuseppe Mazzini (22 June 1805 – 10 March 1872) was an Italian politician, journalist, and activist for the unification of Italy (Risorgimento) and spearhead of the Italian revolutionary movement. His efforts helped bring about the independent and unified Italy in place of the several separate states, many dominated by foreign powers, that existed until the 19th century.

[154] The word Fenian served as an umbrella term for the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and their affiliate in the United States, the Fenian Brotherhood. They were secret political organisations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries dedicated to the establishment of an independent Irish Republic. In 1867, they sought to coordinate raids into Canada from the United States with a rising in Ireland.

much impression in America—but in order to satisfy a section of the British public. The present danger, he considered, lay in the over-conciliatory, over-yielding tone of a great number of English writers and public men, which might lead the Americans to fancy they would be quite safe in pushing us into a corner, and so bring about a state of things which would render a fight unavoidable. As for the *Alabama* question, he urged that the more quietly the claims were discussed, the more satisfactory the result was likely to be, and he strongly advised that the discussion should take place in Europe rather than in the United

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States: it would be a mistake to send a *mission d'éclat*[155] to Washington, as such a mission would be taken as a surrender at discretion. Whether the mission of Lord Ripon[156] and his colleagues to Washington three years later could be correctly described as a *mission d'éclat* or not is of little importance, but it certainty ended in surrender.

The letters from Paris about this period abound in misgivings as to the political situation in France. The conviction was becoming general that the Bonaparte dynasty was too weak to stand any shock. The Emperor, it was true, began to show indications of proceeding gradually towards Parliamentary government, in the hope of founding a state of things which might render the position tenable on his death for his son, but it seemed more probable that the progress might be too slow for the object. Towards the end of February some apprehension was created by a circumstantial rumour that the Emperor had announced positively to Russia that France would not allow the annexation of the Grand Duchy of Baden to the North German Confederation, and a month later a vague fear was felt of the imminence of a *coup de théâtre*.[157]

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, March 27, 1868.

> I ought to say that there are, among not unreasonable or inexperienced people, vague apprehensions that the Emperor may, *more suo*,[158] resort to a *coup de théâtre* and declare war when it is least expected. The only act which can be cited in support of these apprehensions is the formation of two more camps of instruction this year than usual. It is said that the effect of this will be to have two

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> additional army corps ready to take the field at short notice. But the real ground of the apprehension appears to be a resemblance real or fancied between the declaration and proceedings of the Emperor now, and those which preceded the war with Italy. I believe it to be true that Prince Napoleon has told the Emperor that war with Germany must be

[155] Glorious mission.
[156] George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon, KG, GCSI, CIE, VD, PC (24 October 1827 – 9 July 1909), styled Viscount Goderich from 1833 to 1859 and as Earl de Grey and Ripon from 1859 to 1871, was a British politician and Viceroy and Governor General of India who served in every Liberal cabinet between 1861 and 1908. He was born at 10 Downing Street, London, the second son of Prime Minister F. J. Robinson, 1st Viscount Goderich (who was created Earl of Ripon in 1833).
[157] A sudden dramatic turn of events.
[158] In his own way.

made this year or never, but I do not think the Prince advises the war being made at all. The general impression indeed here appears to be that there is at this moment an amount of discontent in the annexed provinces which might be turned to account now by France, but which will subside in a year's time, if the Prussian Government is left to carry into effect its plans. Southern Germany, it is thought, would go with France *after* a French victory, but not without one. For my own part I am more inclined to believe that the Emperor is sincerely anxious to preserve peace. In case of war he must take the field in person, and it is much doubted whether he is willing or able to endure the mental and bodily fatigue of a campaign. Defeat would be fatal and anything short of great success and additions of territory far from advantageous. It is of course impossible to say what a man so reserved and really so little in the habit of making up his mind long beforehand, may or may not do, and therefore the possibility of a *coup de théâtre* must I suppose always be kept in one's mind. Still I must say that all I can make out leads me to believe that his present wishes and intentions are peaceful.

A good deal of interest had been aroused by a visit of Prince Napoleon to Germany in the spring, which gave rise to much speculation in the political world. His friends gave out that it was merely an ordinary tour. Others, who were supposed to be well informed, declared (probably much to the satisfaction of the Prince) that he had been sent on a private mission from the Emperor, of which none of His Majesty's Ministers had any cognizance. Two

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different objects were assigned to the mission; one that he was commissioned to assure Bismarck of the Emperor's determination to remain at peace if possible, but to represent that Bismarck should act so as to make it easy, and should not use the presumed hostility of France so frequently as a lever to move public opinion in Germany. The other and less probable object with which he was credited, was that he was to summon Prussia to join France against Russia in Turkey, a fantastic absurdity which was directly contrary to Moustier's policy in the East. The probability is that Prince Napoleon had no mission at all, but the long letter which follows is interesting as showing what correct conclusions an intelligent person can occasionally draw from a well-timed visit to a foreign country.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley.
Paris, March 31, 1868.

Although I have not seen Prince Napoleon myself since his return from Germany, I think I can give you a tolerably accurate notion of the language he holds.

He speaks with satisfaction of the manner in which he was himself received at Berlin. He thinks that Count Bismarck will not provoke France to war by increasing at present the area of the North German Confederation, or any other overt act. He believes him to be sincerely desirous of avoiding a war, but not to be willing to allow any interference on the part of France in the affairs of Northern Germany, or to make any patent concession whatever to France. He conceived it to be vain to talk to Prussia of disarmament, as she would answer that she was already disarmed, having only 200,000 men under arms. Her

system, which would enable her to put from 4 to 600,000 men in a condition to take the field in eight or ten days, she could not be persuaded to change.

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The Prince has seen nothing, except in the United States, like the contempt in which foreign nations are held in Prussia. Austria is not considered to be worth taking into account at all. Great indifference is professed as to Italy and Turkey. The Prince does not believe that there is any formal treaty between Russia and Prussia, but is convinced that there is an understanding that, in return for a friendly neutrality in the West, Prussia is, in case of being at war with France, to give Russia free scope in the East.

The Prince gives no weight to the assertions that the recently annexed provinces would see with pleasure an attack by France upon Prussia and use it to recover their independence. He is not blind to the discontent which prevails among a great part of the populations in those provinces, but he is convinced that an attack from abroad would rouse an almost universal spirit of resistance in Germany which would extend even to the German possession of Austria. The allegations to the contrary come from adherents of the dispossessed dynasties, who fancy that their own peculiar feelings are the feelings of the mass of their countrymen. The Saxon army might possibly be a danger to the Prussians, if the Prussians should be defeated, and in that event, Bavaria and Wurtemberg might also support France. But they would none of them do anything for France until she had gained so decided a victory as to have no need of them. In Saxony the Prince found the army to be ill-disposed to Prussia, but not the commercial classes.

The Prince has not come back with the idea that France could easily attempt to annex Rhenish Prussia. He believes that the inhabitants are now prosperous and contented and better off than they would be under France with her present institutions. Cologne might turn out to be another Saragossa to France. The case might in his opinion be different in the Palatinate, and France would, he supposes, have little difficulty in “assimilating” Belgium if she obtained possession of that country.

So far the impressions brought back by the Prince are calculated to show that the policy of France

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should be to remain at peace, and his language to the Emperor may have had a good effect. But he has also said to the Emperor and others that a war with Prussia should be made this year or never; that the consolidation of Germany is proceeding surely and rapidly; that the adhesion of Southern Germany will soon follow, and that hereafter war would have to be waged with a Germany thoroughly united and perfectly organized.

Prince Napoleon is himself opposed to war. He considers that an unsuccessful war would overthrow the Emperor and his dynasty and send the whole Bonaparte family to the right about. A war only partially successful would, he thinks, rather weaken than strengthen the Emperor at home, while a thoroughly successful war would simply give His Majesty a fresh lease of “Cæsarism” and adjourn indefinitely the liberal institutions which he

> considers essential to the durability of the dynasty. At the same time the Prince is not without apprehension as to war being made this season. He fears weak men, and he looks upon the Emperor as a weak man. He fears the people who surround His Majesty, the Generals, the Chamberlains, the ladies of the Palace. It has been particularly observed that while the Prince has been very communicative as to the opinions expressed by him to the Emperor, he has been, contrary to his wont, wholly silent as to what the Emperor said to him.

This account of Prince Napoleon's views was derived from Colonel Claremont,[159] the British Military Attaché, who was on intimate terms with him. Prince Napoleon, one of the best abused and most unpopular of Frenchmen, had, with all his talents, little fixity of purpose, no real perseverance, and was too much wanting in courage to become the head of a party; but the insight which he displayed with regard to the real situation between France and Prussia is really remarkable. There is hardly a single opinion, in the letter quoted above, which was not shown

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subsequently to be absolutely accurate and well founded, and one cannot help suspecting that he afterwards must have derived some melancholy consolation from the realization of his prophecies of evil.

The general uneasiness which was felt in France, and to which constant allusion is made in private letters and in despatches, was in no way allayed by the pacific declarations of the Emperor, which seem, indeed, to have made an effect exactly contrary to what was intended. It was in vain that ministers made reassuring statements; bankers and capitalists had lost confidence in the maintenance of peace, and, although the diplomatic world was quiet, the public was convinced that war was imminent. The one thing that was certain was that France was preparing for a war of some kind, and the suspicions of Lord Stanley were aroused by a request from Moustier that Her Majesty's Government should "give advice" to the Prussian Government.

Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, April 14, 1868.

> You will receive from me to-day a despatch which seems to confirm in some degree the apprehensions so generally felt at Paris. It may mean less than it appears to imply, but a warning given at Berlin that any attempt or any measure tending towards the annexation of the South German states will be regarded unfavourably at Paris, is so like a threat that one cannot help feeling anxious as to the result, and how it can be conveyed in language which will not be considered offensive, passes my comprehension. If nothing else had occurred, one might think that it was only a piece of unnecessary fuss on the part of Moustier, whose alternations of activity and indolence are

[159] General Edward Charles John Stopford Claremont CB (born Stopford; 23 January 1819 – 16 July 1890) was a British soldier who was the United Kingdom's first military attaché, holding the post in Paris for 25 years. Stopford Claremont was born in Paris with the name Edward Charles John Stopford, the illegitimate son of Lt.-Gen. Hon. Sir Edward Stopford and Anaïs Pauline Nathalie Aubert, known as Mademoiselle Anaïs, an actress in the Comédie-Française. He was naturalised in Britain by private act of Parliament in 1836 with the name of Edward Stopford Claremont.

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> not always easy to follow; but looked at together with the military preparations which have so much alarmed Colonel Claremont and which you do not seem to contemplate without some uneasiness, the state of things indicated is certainly not pleasant. Perhaps I make too much of this: up to the present time I have always contended against the alarmist view of the situation, and Bernstorff,[160] whose information is generally good, shows no anxiety. It is the business of war departments in all countries to look at foreign policy from their special point of view, and I class the utterances of General Moltke[161] with those of Marshal Niel,[162] as professorial rather than political.
>
> In any case I am not disposed to volunteer advice which would certainly be uncalled for, probably useless, and perhaps altogether out of place. Nor can I fail to detect in Moustier's language a wish, hardly concealed, to enlist England on the side of the French claim that Prussia shall not be enlarged--though it is disguised under the form of asking us to give advice in the interests of peace.

There can be no doubt that Lord Stanley was right, and that Moustier's intention was to commit England to the French side under the guise of a friendly communication to the Prussian Government. The refusal to be drawn into Franco-Prussian entanglement was sound, but, as will be seen, the British Government did attempt to intervene shortly afterwards.

In spite of highly coloured orations by Marshal Niel, and of an important speech by General Moltke on the position which Germany should hold as a predominant power in Europe, and of the use to be made of the army and navy in consolidating German unity, which caused much irritation in France, the fear of the outbreak of war

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passed temporarily away, and calm again reigned in the diplomatic world. In August, Lord Cowley, former ambassador at Paris, paid a visit to the Emperor Napoleon at Fontainebleau, and found him in a very depressed mood.

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[160] Prussian Ambassador in London. (LN). Albrecht Graf von Bernstorff (22 March 1809 – 26 March 1873) was a Prussian statesman and diplomat who held several posts in Europe. From 1854 to 1861 he was head of the Prussian Embassy in London before becoming Prussian Foreign Minister. He returned to London as Prussian Ambassador and after 1871, as German Imperial ambassador with the rank of minister of state, which he remained until his death in 1873.

[161] Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (German: [26 October 1800 – 24 April 1891) was a Prussian field marshal. The chief of staff of the Prussian Army for thirty years, he is regarded as the creator of a new, more modern method of directing armies in the field and one of the finest military minds of his generation. He commanded troops in Europe and the Middle East, in the Second Schleswig War, Austro-Prussian War, and Franco-Prussian War. He is often referred to as Moltke the Elder to distinguish him from his nephew Helmuth von Moltke the Younger (Helmuth Johann Ludwig von Moltke), who commanded the German army at the outbreak of the First World War.

[162] Adolphe Niel (4 October 1802 – 13 August 1869) was a French Army general and statesman. After military commands overseas Niel became minister of war and held the position from 1867 to 1869. In this capacity he drafted and began to carry out a far-reaching scheme of army reform but died before they came to fruition.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley
Paris, Aug. 11, 1868.

Lord Cowley wrote me a short note after his return from Fontainebleau and sent me an account of what had been said there.

He appears to have thought the Emperor aged, and to have found him much depressed. His Majesty said little of Foreign Politics, but spoke gloomily of his own position in France. He said that the country districts were still for him, but that all the towns were against him: a vast number of persons had congregated at Troyes to see him, but he had been assured by the Prefect that most of them were in reality red Republicans. The Emperor does not seem to have said anything about the Queen. The Empress held the same language that she and her entourage did to us, but from an expression she let fall, it would seem that she is sore at heart about the visit. The public appear to be rather accepting the version that it was in compliance with a request from the Empress, that Her Majesty, being ill and fatigued, abstained from returning the visit.

It is not certain whether the Emperor and Empress will be at Biarritz or at St. Cloud at the time of Her Majesty's return. If they are at Biarritz there can be no question of any visit, and this might give an opportunity for a letter, which might smooth the difficulties of the point of etiquette. If the Emperor and Empress are at St. Cloud, it must be considered the same thing as if they were at Paris.

I hear from other persons besides Lord Cowley that the Emperor is very much out of spirits. It is even asserted that he is weary of the whole thing, disappointed at the contrast between the brilliancy

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at the beginning of his reign and the present gloom—and inclined, if it were possible, to retire into private life. This is no doubt a great exaggeration, but if he is really feeling unequal to governing with energy, the dynasty and the country are in great danger. Probably the wisest thing he could do, would be to allow real parliamentary government to be established, so as to give the opposition a hope of coming into office by less violent means than a revolution.

The "soreness of heart" referred to a visit of Queen Victoria, who had passed through Paris in July on her way to Switzerland. It had been arranged, after prodigious correspondence, that the Empress should come up to the Elysée Palace and call upon the Queen at the Embassy (the Elysée having been selected on account of its proximity), but apparently nothing was settled about a return visit on the part of the Queen. At all events, no return visit was paid to the Elysée, and the consequence was that a section of the French press seized upon the occasion maliciously to represent that the Emperor and Empress were no longer treated with consideration by the ancient Royal Houses, and that England was all in favour of the pretensions of the House of Orleans.

These attacks naturally caused much annoyance to the Emperor, who was always very sensitive where the Orleans family was concerned, and he was placed in a somewhat embarrassing position

with regard to the return journey of Queen Victoria through Paris, since, owing to the visit of the Empress not having been returned, he was unable to pay his respects as he had been anxious to do. The difficulty was eventually solved by the Emperor and Empress arranging to go to Biarritz at the time when the Queen was expected to pass through Paris

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on the return journey, and an explanatory letter from the latter was considered to have closed the matter satisfactorily. If any trace of soreness remained it was doubtless removed by the highly successful visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales later in the year.

The Imperial spirits, which were much in need of a tonic, were temporarily revived by the demonstrations of loyalty shown by the National Guards at a review held in August, and this evidence of personal popularity appears to have surprised most people. It may be presumed, however, that the unfortunate Emperor was frequently misled on these occasions. Astonishment and admiration had frequently been evoked at the spectacle of the autocrat shaking hands freely with blouse-clad working men and exchanging fraternal greetings with them on the occasion of public festivities, but, according to the Prefect of Police, these favoured individuals were in every case his own detectives masquerading as horny-handed sons of toil.

Two questions of secondary importance about this period were brought to the attention of the British Government, the one concerning Tunis, and the other the Throne of Spain. In Tunis the French showed an unmistakable intention to establish themselves as the paramount power, and it was not clear whether England would remain indifferent or not. Lord Stanley, upon being asked for instructions, gave it as his personal opinion that there was no occasion to show any jealousy of French influence there, and that the position of the French as near neighbours gave them a strong interest. He declined to believe in annexation, as Algeria had not been such a success that any government would be likely to desire to extend the French dominions in North Africa. The

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French Government therefore obtained, as far as we were concerned, a free hand, and although Bismarck intimated that the claims of Prussia in Tunis would have to be considered, it is probable that had it not been for the Franco-German War, that country would have become a French possession in 1870 instead of in 1880.

With regard to Spain, it is worthy of note that the Spanish Government was in 1868 desirous of offering the throne to the Duke of Edinburgh.[163] Both Queen Victoria and her ministers, however, were strongly opposed to the project, and their opposition was founded on good sense. The throne, they considered, was insecure. New dynasties took root with difficulty, more especially in Spain, where respect for foreigners was not a national characteristic, and it would be disagreeable for England to have an English prince, however detached from England, involved in a civil war, and possibly ejected. Again, even if the experiment were successful, it would confer no real advantage on England, while it would probably excite extreme jealousy in France. Further, we should

[163] Alfred (Alfred Ernest Albert; 6 August 1844 – 30 July 1900) was sovereign Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha from 22 August 1893 until his death in 1900. He was the second son and fourth child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. He was known as the Duke of Edinburgh from 1866 until he succeeded his paternal uncle Ernest II as the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in the German Empire.

probably be asked to give up Gibraltar in return, and if this were refused, which of course would be the case, there would be a complaint, if not of absolute unfairness, yet at least of ingratitude on our part. If any form of monarchy was to be retained, the opinion was expressed that the cause of religious freedom would be better served by a moderate Catholic on the throne than by a Protestant.

Such were the matter-of-fact views of Her Majesty's Government as expressed by Lord Stanley, and nothing more was heard of the proposed candidature of the Duke of Edinburgh. The straightforward action of the British

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Government on this occasion contrasts favourably with that of other Powers when the question of the choice of a King of Spain recurred two years later.

In October, Lord Clarendon, who had been Lord Stanley's predecessor at the Foreign Office, arrived in Paris. Lord Clarendon, in addition to a thorough acquaintance with foreign political questions, enjoyed apparently the great advantage of being a *persona grata* to all the principal personages in Europe, and was honoured with the confidence of Napoleon III., the King of Prussia, King Victor Emmanuel, the Pope, and a host of other persons occupying high and responsible positions. As the Liberal party was at that time in opposition, he bore no responsibility, and it was therefore possible for him to use language and arguments which might not have been appropriate to any one speaking officially on behalf of a government. The valuable and interesting information which Lord Clarendon thus obtained was, in accordance with the high principles upon which he acted, placed unreservedly at the disposition of his political opponents.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley.
Paris, Oct. 13, 1868.

> Lord Clarendon arrived here on Saturday. He has given me accounts of interesting conversations he has had with the King and Queen of Prussia[164] and with General Moltke. The details he will no doubt repeat to you when you see him. The sum of what was said by all three is that Prussia earnestly desires to keep at peace with France; that she will be very careful not to give offence and very slow to take offence: that if a war is brought on she will act so as to make it manifest to Germany and to Europe that France is the unprovoked aggressor: that a war brought on evidently by France would

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> infallibly unite all Germany. Moltke seemed to believe that the Emperor Napoleon must know too well how thoroughly prepared Prussia is to provoke a war lightly. He was, on his side, well aware of the complete state of preparation in which the French were: he

[164] At this date Wilhelm I (William I; William Frederick Louis; German: Wilhelm Friedrich Ludwig; 22 March 1797 – 9 March 1888) was King of Prussia from 1861 and German Emperor from 1871 until his death in 1888. A member of the House of Hohenzollern, he was the first head of state of a united Germany. He was regent of Prussia from 1858 to 1861 for his elder brother, King Frederick William IV. In June 1829, he married Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (Born Princess Maria Luise Augusta Katharina of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; 30 September 1811 – 7 January 1890). She was Queen of Prussia and the first German Empress.

thought Prussia had lost an opportunity after Sadowa, and that if she had then known that France could not bring more than 150,000 men into the field, she might have settled the whole affair of German unity out of hand. This opportunity had been lost, according to him, by the incorrectness of the information from the Embassy at Paris, and now Prussia must have peace if possible in order to organize her system of government civil and military.

In short, Lord Clarendon is sure that the Emperor Napoleon may be confident that he has nothing to fear from Prussia, if he does not give her just provocation: but, on the other hand, that Prussia does not fear a war, if she can show Germany and the world that she is really forced into it.

I think I might very well mention to Moustier the impression Lord Clarendon has brought back, and indeed to the Emperor, if I have an opportunity.

Lord Clarendon gathered from Moltke and others that there is a very strong feeling in the Prussian army against Russia and a very great repugnance to accepting Russian assistance. In case however of a war with France, Prussia must of course (Moltke observed) get help wherever she could find it, and must at all events use Russia to paralyze Austria. Austria he thought hostile, and very naturally so, to Prussia, and ready to do all the harm she can. She is not however, in his opinion, in a condition to be otherwise than neutral at the beginning of a war.

Lord Clarendon tells me he most forcibly pointed out to the King of Prussia and Moltke the extreme danger of giving France any provocation; anything like a challenge could not be passed over by the Emperor: if the glove were thrown down, public feeling would oblige His Majesty to take it up. Lord Clarendon urged them to settle the Danish question, and even suggested that some way should be sought of giving a satisfaction to French *amour propre*.[165]

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It will be seen that the information obtained by Lord Clarendon coincided more or less with the impressions derived by Prince Napoleon. Upon Lord Stanley it produced a reassuring effect, and confirmed him in his opinion that the Prussians were in a state of alarm which they were endeavouring unsuccessfully to conceal, under an ostentation of being ready for whatever might happen. In any case, he thought, they would have a respite until the spring.

Lord Clarendon was fortunate enough to be able to give the Emperor Napoleon the benefit of his Prussian experiences.

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley.
Paris, Oct. 20, 1868.

Lord Clarendon dined at St. Cloud yesterday, and had a long conversation with the Emperor after dinner. He repeated to His Majesty the pacific language which he had heard

[165] Belief and confidence in your own ability and value

from the King of Prussia, the Queen of Prussia, and General Moltke. The Emperor heard the pacific assurances with evident satisfaction, and spoke very strongly himself in the same sense. Lord Clarendon was thoroughly convinced that the Emperor was exceedingly anxious to avoid war and thoroughly convinced that peace was desirable for the interests of the dynasty. At the same time, His Majesty declared that if anything like a challenge came from Prussia it would be impossible for him to oppose the feeling of the army and the nation, and that he must, in such a case, for the sake of his own safety, make war. He was most anxious that England should step in to enable France and Prussia to withdraw with honour from their present antagonistic attitude. This is an idea which, as you know, has been vaguely suggested to me more than once by men more or less in the Emperor's confidence. It has never been hinted by Moustier in speaking to me. The Emperor appears,

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however, to have dwelt a good deal upon it with Lord Clarendon yesterday, and even to have entered a little upon details. He seems to have relished the idea of other great powers being united with England in a sort of mediation, but I did not gather that he had any matured plan, or any distinct notion of the way in which practical effect could be given to his wishes. His object was to calm public opinion in France, and the means of doing this were to be a sort of collective confirmation by Europe of the Treaty of Prague, and a sort of pressure to be exercised by Europe on France and Prussia which would compel them, or rather enable them, to diminish their military preparations and take effectual steps to restore public confidence. Whatever may be the feasibility of the Emperor's project, it is important to know what is in his mind, and convenient to learn it with so much certainty, and at the same time in a way which prevents its being presented to H.M. Government as a proposal or a suggestion to them. There is nothing as the matter stands which necessitates even an expression of opinion from us.

The Emperor told Clarendon in strict confidence of a proposal which he had not, he said, mentioned even to his Ministers. Men of weight (*des hommes sérieux*) had proposed a Confederation between the South German States and Switzerland. Lord Clarendon pointed out objections to the notion, such as the want of any real bond of sympathy or interest between Switzerland and the proposed confederates, and the offence which would be taken by Prussia, and the Emperor appeared (for the moment, at least) to have given up the idea.

The King of Prussia told Lord Clarendon, and Lord Clarendon repeated it to the Emperor, that the speech at Kiel was intended to be thoroughly pacific, and that its object was to make the Prussian army and the public take quietly the anti-Prussian cries stated to have been uttered by the French troops at the camp at Chalons. The Emperor positively declared that no anti-Prussian cries and no political cries of any kind beyond the usual loyal cheers had been uttered at the camp.

Of Spanish affairs little seems to have been said in the conversation with the Emperor. At dinner the

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> Empress talked of little else. She did not appear to favour any particular solution of the question or any particular candidate for the Crown. She appeared to expect both political troubles and extreme misery from the famine which she says is undoubtedly impending. As to her own estates and those of her relations in Spain she says they return absolutely nothing, and that the peasants have not even put by grain enough to sow the land. No one dares to store up grain or to bring it from abroad lest he should be torn to pieces by the ignorant people as an accapareur.[166]

From this interesting communication it will be noted that Napoleon III. apparently reposed more confidence in Lord Clarendon than in his own ministers; the "*hommes sérieux*" were, however, probably mythical, as the proposed Confederation of Switzerland and the Southern German States was not a project which would commend itself to practical people, and is more likely to have been conceived in his own nebulous imagination. The important conclusion to be drawn from his language is that the Emperor was, at all events, at that period, sincerely anxious to avoid war, conscious of the military power of Prussia, and extremely anxious to induce the British Government to take some step in the nature of mediation which should avert the threatened conflict and enable France to withdraw with honour. This suggestion had already been ineffectually made to Lord Stanley in the spring; but, as will be seen, a similar suggestion was again put forward in the following year and acted upon.

Before the end of 1868 changes took place both in the British and in the French Foreign Offices. The return of

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the Liberal party to power restored Lord Clarendon to his old post, and M. de Moustier gave place to M. de La Valette.[167] The departure of Moustier was no loss. At Constantinople he had shown himself to be restless and overbearing; in France he was not considered to be entirely satisfactory where semi-financial matters were concerned, and he finished his career by nearly getting into a serious scrape with the Prussian Government over the question of the latter being represented on a proposed Commission at Tunis. The Emperor Napoleon, although he entertained no grievance against Lord Stanley, naturally welcomed the return to office of Lord Clarendon.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Dec. 15, 1868.

> I came back from Compiègne yesterday. During the week I was there the Emperor seemed to be in remarkably good health and spirits, and was to all appearance very free from care.

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[166] A hoarder

[167] Charles Jean Marie Félix, marquis de La Valette (25 November 1806 – 2 May 1881) was a French politician and diplomat. He was Minister of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs in the government of Emperor Napoleon III. He was French Ambassador to Constantinople from 1851–53, before the Crimean War, then served as a government minister, before a posting to the Vatican (an ancestral family member Jean Parisot de Valette had been Grand Master of the Order of Malta). An Anglophile, he finally returned to London in an official capacity as French Ambassador from 1869 to 1870.

If he has any special plan regarding foreign politics, he is keeping it *in petto*[168] to electrify the Corps Diplomatique on New Year's Day, or the Chambers in his opening speech. He talked a great deal to me of his desire to maintain his cordial understanding with England and of his confidence in your helping him to do so, but he did not speak as if he had any intention of putting our friendship to any special test at present.

He said that the conduct of the Greeks was very annoying, but that in dealing with them, we must make some allowance for their feeling of nationality and not *froisser*[169] it too much. I observed to him that the Greeks, by their conduct with regard to Crete, were producing a state of things which would be absolutely intolerable, and that they were in my opinion doing themselves much more harm than they did the Turks. In this he seemed to concur. My Russian colleague, Stackelberg,[170] was in a dreadful fuss about the Turco-Greek question. The main anxiety he expressed was, not unnaturally,

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for the King and the dynasty. We might perhaps work upon Russia by showing that the dynasty would be continually popular if Greek aggressions, and consequently excitement and disorder in Greece, are allowed to become chronic.

The Emperor talked a little and the Empress a great deal about Spain; both took a gloomy view of the prospects, but neither gave any hint of the solution to be desired.

The Crown Prince of Prussia,[171] whose peaceful proclivities became subsequently known to the world, happened to be in England at this time, and Lord Clarendon took the opportunity of discussing the Franco-Prussian situation with him. The Crown Prince had already impressed Lord Stanley with his amiability, modesty, and good sense, but it is evident that, like many others, he had not fully realized the great sacrifices which the Germans were ready to make in the cause of national unity.

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[168] Private or secret.

[169] To offend or upset their feeling of nationality. To ruffle their feathers

[170] Count Ernst Johann von Stackelberg ((1813 – 30 August 1870) was a Baltic German military figure and diplomat. Following a military career he became a diplomat. In 1861, he was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Spain and then sent to Italy in the same capacity a year later. In 1863, Stackelberg was moved to Vienna as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. Four years later, he was appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Paris, where he would die on 30 August 1870.

[171] Frederick III (Friedrich Wilhelm Nikolaus Karl; 18 October 1831 – 15 June 1888), or Friedrich III, was German Emperor and King of Prussia for 99 days between March and his death in June 1888. He was the only son of Emperor Wilhelm I. Following the unification of Germany in 1871 his father, then King of Prussia, became German Emperor. Upon Wilhelm's death at the age of ninety on 9 March 1888, the thrones passed to Frederick, who had been German Crown Prince for seventeen years and Crown Prince of Prussia for twenty-seven years. Frederick was suffering from cancer of the larynx when he died at the age of 56, following unsuccessful medical treatments for his condition.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, Dec. 18, 1868.

My inchoate letter on the 16th was cut short by the Crown Prince of Prussia, with whom I had an interesting conversation. He is even more pacific than his Father, and unlike his Father would be glad to put the army on something more like a peace footing. The King however is unapproachable on this subject, but the Prince says that in a year or two he will have to yield to the outcry of the people against the increased taxation that such monster armaments entail. He means to consult some experienced officers as to the manner in which reduction can be made without offence to the dignity of his martial Sire, and he said that something had been done in that direction by postponing till January the assembling of the levies that ought to have taken place in October. I urged strongly upon him the

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necessity of maintaining the *status quo*, and particularly warned him against the incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Baden into the Northern Confederation. He quite entered into the reasons for this and said it would probably be a long time before the interests of the South would necessitate a junction with the North, although it would ultimately be inevitable.

When I last saw you on my way home from St. Cloud I told you that the Emperor wished me to report my conversation with him to the Queen of Prussia—I did so. She forwarded my letter to the King and sent me his answer, which was not only pacific but extremely courteous to the Emperor. He said there was no fear of the *status quo* being changed now, but that some time or other the South and North must be united, and that it would be far better to *calmer les esprits*[172] by teaching people to expect it and not to look upon it as a danger or a menace to France, which it would not be any more than the existing state of things. I wrote all this to the Emperor who assured me that the King of Prussia's opinions had interested him much and that he agreed in his views about the inexpediency of a Congress. Disraeli[173] made a bad use at the Lord Mayor's dinner of your letter giving an account of my interview with the Emperor, for he gave it to be understood that Stanley was successfully mediating between France and Prussia, etc; La Tour d'Auvergne,[174] to whom the Emperor had told our conversation, was much annoyed and feared that he might be thought guilty of an indiscretion.

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[172] Calm the spirits.

[173] Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (21 December 1804 – 19 April 1881) was a British statesman, Conservative politician and writer who twice served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He played a central role in the creation of the Conservative Party, defining its policies and its broad outreach. Disraeli is remembered for his influential voice in world affairs, his political battles with the Liberal Party leader William Ewart Gladstone, and his one-nation conservatism or "Tory democracy". He was Prime Minister from 27 February 1868 to 1 December 1868 then from 20 February 1874 to 21 April 1880.

[174] Henri-Godefroi-Bernard-Alphonse, 1st Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne, 2nd Marquis de Saint-Paulet (21 October 1823 – 5 May 1871) was a French politician of the Second Empire who twice served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for Emperor Napoleon III. He was Ambassador of France to London (1863–69), in which capacity he was a signatory to the Treaty of London in 1867.

> I was glad to learn by your letter of the 15th that you thought well of the Emperor's health, as reports have of late been rife that he was failing both in body and mind—their object was probably, and as usual, some Bourse speculation.

The chronic anxiety with regard to the relations between France and Prussia which prevailed at this time was partially forgotten early in 1869 in consequence of a slight crisis in the East. The Cretan Insurrection had lasted

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for several years, and the Turks had shown themselves incapable of suppressing it in consequence of the attitude of the Greek Government, which, supported by Russia, openly encouraged the revolutionary movement. Greek armed cruisers ran the blockade, volunteers openly showed themselves in uniform in the Greek towns, and the Greeks showed a disposition to go to war, rightly assuming that Europe would never allow their country to be reconquered. At length the situation, from the Turkish point of view, became intolerable, and in December, 1868, the Turkish Government delivered an ultimatum, which was rejected by the Greeks and diplomatic relations were broken off. The opportunity was at once seized by the Emperor Napoleon in order to propose a Conference. Conferences had, as is well known, a special attraction for Napoleon III., who delighted to figure as a magnificent and beneficent arbiter graciously condescending to settle the squabbles of inferior beings, but a Conference has also often captivated the imagination of many diplomatists besides the late Prince Gortchakoff,[175] whose chief delight it was to make orations to his colleagues. Nothing produces so agreeable a flutter in diplomacy as the prospect of a Conference. Where shall it be held? What is to be its basis? Who are to be the representatives? What Governments shall be entitled to appear? If such a one is invited, will it be possible to exclude another? And supposing these knotty points to be satisfactorily settled, shall some Power possessing doubtful credentials be allowed a _*voix consultative*,[176] or a *voix délibérative*? In this particular case, there was no difficulty in fixing upon the place, but there was considerable difficulty with regard to the participation of Greece, as Turkey flatly refused to meet her. The prospect of a Conference was not viewed with much

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satisfaction by Lord Clarendon, who asked awkward but necessary questions about "basis" and so forth, and warned Lord Lyons that he would have to be very firm with La Valette on this point, "as I know by experience in 1856 how fickle the Emperor is, and how invariably his minister changes with him, and throws over the engagements upon which we had the best reason to rely."

Neither did Lord Lyons look forward to it with any pleasure: "The Conference seems likely to bring into strong light some things which would perhaps be better in the shade," he wrote. "For instance, an understanding between Russia and Prussia on the Eastern Question; bitterness between Austria and Russia, etc., etc. I understand that there is great rejoicing over the prospect of the Conference at the Tuileries." Probably Lord Lyons's distaste arose partly from the fact that foreign diplomatists have a habit of coming and rehearsing to their colleagues the speeches with which

[175] Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov (15 July 1798 – 11 March 1883) was a Russian diplomat and statesman from the Gorchakov princely family. He has an enduring reputation as one of the most influential and respected diplomats of the mid-19th century.
[176] Advisory or consultative powers or voting rights..

they propose subsequently to electrify the assembled Conference. It is only fair to admit, however, that the Conference was brought to a fairly satisfactory conclusion. The Greeks, who had given a great deal of trouble with their consequential pretensions, were admitted under a *voix consultative* condition, and a settlement was arrived at which enabled diplomatic relations to be resumed with Turkey. To put it shortly, the Greeks were informed that they were bound to respect the rules common to all Governments in their future dealing with the Ottoman Empire (surely not a very onerous provision), and the hope was expressed that all the causes for complaint embodied in the ultimatum of the Porte would be removed. Crete, in consequence,

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remained comparatively quiet for about ten years. When, however, a few days after the satisfactory conclusion of this business, the Prussian Government came forward with a proposal that there should be yet another Conference at Paris on International Postage, M. de La Valette was obliged summarily to reject it, as "the French public was sick to death of the very word."

Early in 1869, considerable apprehension was created by the Luxemburg railway affair. A French and a Belgian railway company whose lines adjoined, had endeavoured to bring about an amalgamation, and the Belgian Chamber, naturally afraid of the consequences which might result from French influences within Belgian territory, passed an Act prohibiting concessions of railways without the authorization of the Government. This action caused considerable ill-feeling in France, and a universal belief existed that the Belgian Government had been instigated by Bismarck. It was obvious that England could not remain indifferent to the danger of what would now be called the "peaceful penetration" of France into Belgium,—in other words, the ultimate annexation of that country—and one of the first notes of alarm seems to have been sounded by no less a person than Queen Victoria.

General Grey[177] to Lord Clarendon.
Osborne, Jan. 14, 1869.

> The Queen desired me to write to you yesterday in returning the private letters you sent her with reference to what you said in one of your letters of the probable designs of France in Belgium. Her Majesty wished me to inform you that she had more than once called the

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> attention of the late Government to this subject. The King of the Belgians in writing to her had repeatedly expressed his apprehensions that either by means of a Customs convention or by the purchase by a French company of the Luxemburg Railway to which unusual privileges and advantages would be conceded by the French Government, France might seek to obtain a footing in Belgium highly dangerous to her future independence and neutrality. Her Majesty, though hoping the King might exaggerate the danger, has invariably expressed the strongest opinion that England was bound, not only by the

[177] General Charles Grey (15 March 1804 – 31 March 1870) was a British army officer, member of the British House of Commons and political figure in Lower Canada. In the last two decades of his life, he served successively as private secretary to Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. He was born in Northumberland, England, in 1804, the second son of Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, who was British Prime Minister between November 1830 and July 1834.

> obligations of treaties, but by interests of vital importance to herself, to maintain the integrity and independence as well as the neutrality of Belgium; and that the best security for these essential objects would be found in the knowledge that any proceedings which seemed to threaten their violation would bring England at once into the field.
> Her Majesty did not mean that any official communication should be made on the subject, but that the habitual language of our ministers at Berlin and Paris should be such as to leave no doubt as to the determination of England.[178]

This communication from the Queen was followed not long afterwards by a memorandum from Mr. Gladstone, laying stress upon the fact that the "independence of Belgium was an object of the first interest to the mind of the British People," and hoping that it would be made clear to the French Government "that the suspicion even of an intention on the part of France to pay less respect to the independence of Belgium than to the independence of England would at once produce a temper in the country which would put an end to the good understanding and useful and harmonious co-operation of the two Governments." This was very clear language—especially for Mr. Gladstone[179]—and the Ambassador was directed to hint to the French Government that Belgium was under our special protection.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Feb. 16, 1869.

> Baron Beyens,[180] the Belgian Minister, comes to me frequently about the Grand Luxemburg Railway affair, and is very naturally in great tribulation both for himself and his country.
>
> M. de La Valette also loses no opportunity of speaking to me about it, and appears also to be very much disturbed. For my own part, I can only preach in general terms conciliation to both.
>
> I have found M. de La Valette calm and moderate, but I am afraid there can be no doubt that the affair is extremely annoying to the Emperor, and that His Majesty is very angry. M. de La Valette asked me to call upon him to-day, and told me in the strictest confidence, though he did not pretend to have absolute proof of it, that the whole thing was instigated by Count Bismarck. He considered that there were three possible solutions of the question.
>
> The first, that France should at her own risk and peril annex Belgium to herself. To this solution M. de La Valette was himself utterly opposed.

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[178] Since the Act of Union in 1706, there had been a United Kingdom of England and Scotland with a single parliament.. Wales was not a kingdom but a principality and for many purposes was treated as a region of England sending MPs to Westminster. Like Scotland, Wales did not have its own assembly. The Act of Union of 1801 incorporated Ireland into the United Kingdom. However, the Queen, ministers and Lord Newton often refer to England while meaning the larger entity. (Ed.)

[179] Mr. Gladstone was famous for his prolixity and was once described by his rival, Benjamin Disraeli, as "inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity". (Ed.)

[180] Eugène Beyens (1816 – 1894) was Minister of Belgium in Paris from 1864 to 1894.

> The second was the adoption of retaliatory financial and commercial measures. To this he was also opposed, considering it to be undignified, to be injurious to the interests of Frenchmen, and to constitute a punishment for all Belgians innocent as well as guilty.
>
> The third course was to pursue the line already taken. To admit fully the right of the Belgian Government to act as it had done, but to declare in very distinct terms that it had been guilty of a very *mauvais procédé*[181] towards France, and that the Government of the Emperor was deeply wounded and very seriously displeased. He said that he was about to prepare a despatch in the above sense.
>
> I need not say that I did all in my power to strengthen his aversion to the two first courses, and to induce him to soften the tone of his communication to Belgium.
>
> He seemed however to be afraid that the Emperor would be hardly satisfied with so little,

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> and he declared it to be quite impossible that any friendship could hereafter exist between the French Government and the present Belgian Ministry. In fact, he was far from sure that his policy would be adopted.
>
> He talks of Bismarck and his ways in a tone which is not comfortable, and the irritation in France against Prussia seems to increase rather than diminish. Certainly confidence in peace has not increased lately.

M. de La Valette may have been calm and moderate, but his Imperial Master was very much the reverse, and his conduct of the affair was a striking instance of his ineptitude. He had thoroughly frightened the Belgians, alienated public opinion in England, and aroused well-founded suspicions throughout Europe that he intended to fasten a quarrel upon Belgium in order to facilitate its eventual annexation. According to Lord Clarendon, the idea that Bismarck had prompted Belgian action was a complete mare's nest, but even if that were not so, it ought to have been plain to the Emperor that if there was one thing more than another which would gladden Prussia, it was a misunderstanding between France and England. The feeling in England at the time may be judged by Gladstone's language, who wrote to Lord Clarendon in March 12:-

> "That the day when this nation seriously suspects France of meaning ill to Belgian independence will be the last day of friendship with that country, and that then a future will open for which no man can answer."

This apparently was what the Emperor was unable to see.

> "Bismarck is biding his time quietly," wrote Lord Clarendon. "If France annexes Belgium and we take

[181] Poor conduct or doing things the wrong way.

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> no part he will be delighted, as France could no longer complain of Prussian aggrandisement. If we do take part, he would be equally delighted at the rupture between England and France, and would come to our assistance. Either way he thinks Prussia would gain. Why should Napoleon and La Valette assist him? A quarrel between France and England or even a coolness is the great German desideratum." "I believe," he adds in another letter, "nothing would be more agreeable to Prussia than that the intimacy between the two countries should be disturbed by a territorial encroachment which would run on all fours with Prussian aggrandisement."

For some reason, which was not clear, the Emperor persisted in making the question a personal one, announcing that he "could not and would not take a *soufflet*[182] from Belgium," and the British Government became so apprehensive of his attitude that the somewhat unheroic course was adopted of sending a warning to the French Government, but leaving the responsibility of presenting, or of withholding it, to the Ambassador.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 16, 1869.

> We are very anxious about the Belgian business because more or less convinced that the Emperor is meaning mischief and intending to establish unfriendly relations with Belgium preparatory to ulterior designs. It is very imprudent on his part, and he will only reap disappointment, for even if he meditates war with Prussia he could not undertake it upon a worse pretext or one less likely to win public opinion to his side, as it would wantonly entail an interruption, to use a mild term, of friendly relations with England. It is unnecessary to say that we attach extreme importance to the maintenance unimpaired of those relations, and it is therefore our paramount duty to omit no effort for that object.
>
> I have accordingly, by the unanimous desire of the Cabinet, written you a despatch calling

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> the serious attention of the French Government to the dangerous eventualities that we see looming in the distance, but the mode of dealing with that despatch may be delicate and difficult, and we therefore leave the decision on that point to your discretion. You can either read it, or tell the substance of it at once to La Valette, or you may keep it for a short time until some crisis arrives when it could best be turned to account. I feel that this is rather hard upon you, and I would much rather have been more precise, but, on the spot, you will be such a much better judge of opportunity than I can pretend to be here, and if the warning is to have any success it will depend on its being given at the right moment and in the right manner."

One cannot help wondering whether a similar confidence in an Ambassador's judgment is still shown at the present day, the views of the so-called "man on the spot" being now generally at a considerable discount. In this case, Lord Lyons gave reasons showing that the warning was not needed, and would not be of any advantage to Belgium, while complaining that he disliked going

[182] Slap in the face.

about with a live shell in his pocket. A few days later, however, Lord Clarendon wrote again saying that he thought that the warning would have to be addressed shortly, as public opinion in England was beginning to become excited, and attacks were being made upon the Government for not using stronger language or showing its determination to stand by Belgium, while the King of the Belgians was anxious to make his woes known through the English press. "If," said Lord Clarendon, "the Emperor attaches value to the English Alliance he ought not to sacrifice it by a sneaking attempt to incorporate Belgium by means of a railway company and its employés. If he wants war it is a bad pretext for doing that which all mankind will blame him for."

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It was not unnatural that Lord Clarendon should have felt uneasy at the threatening development of this apparently insignificant railway difficulty, because it was plain that the one object which the Belgians were bent upon was to entangle us in their concerns, and to make us responsible for their conduct towards France; nor, again, was this an unreasonable proceeding upon their part, for Belgium was an artificial state, and as dependent upon foreign guarantees for her existence as Holland was dependent upon her dykes. Perhaps in order to reassure the British Government, Marshal Niel's aide-de-camp and General Fleury[183] were sent over to London in April. They brought a message from the Marshal to the effect that France was ready for anything, and that the Emperor had only to give the word; but that to begin by a rupture with England about a miserable Belgian difference would be a *sottise*[184]. These visitors did more to convince the French Ambassador in London that there was no danger of war than all his correspondence with the French Foreign Office, but Lord Clarendon continued to be apprehensive of the influence excited upon the Emperor by shady financiers and by an untrustworthy representative at Brussels.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, April 19, 1869.

> I have never, as you know, felt any confidence in the soft sayings and assurances of the French Government, but I did not think they would have exposed the cloven foot so soon and completely as they have done. No affair has given me so much pain since my return to this place, and I foresee that out of it will grow serious complications and an end to those friendly relations between England and

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> France that are so advantageous to both countries and which have had an important influence on the politics of Europe.
>
> What provokes me is that *sales tripotages*[185] should be at the bottom of it all, and upon that I have reliable information. I know of all the jobbery and *pots de vin*[186] that are passing, and yet it is to fill the pockets of half a dozen rascals, just as in the case of Mexico, that the Emperor allows himself to be dragged through the mud and to imperil the most manifest interests of France.

[183] Émile Félix Fleury (23December 1815 – 11 December 1884) was a French general and diplomat.
[184] Foolishness.
[185] Diplomatic euphemism for "dirty fiddling".
[186] Bribes.

> The policy of the French Government is perfectly understood at Berlin, where the leading object of Bismarck is to detach us from France. We might to-morrow, if we pleased, enter into a coalition with Prussia against France for the protection of Belgian independence, which is a European and not an exclusively French question; but we will do nothing of the kind so long as there is a hope that France will act with common honesty. I wish you would speak seriously to La Valette about the *tripoteurs*,[187] and represent the disgrace to his Government of playing the game of such people, which will all come out and be known in the same way as the Jecker bonds are now unanimously acknowledged to have been the cause of that fatal Mexican expedition.
>
> I send you rather a curious despatch from Loftus.[188] Bismarck's ways are inscrutable, and he is never to be relied upon, but he has had a union with us against France in his head ever since the Belgian business began, for Bernstorff, who never speaks without instructions, has said on more than one occasion to Gladstone and to me that though Prussia would not undertake to defend Belgium single-handed, as that country concerned England more nearly than Prussia, yet that we had but to say the word, and we should soon come to terms. I treated this, as did Gladstone, rather as a *façon de parler*[189] and a ruse to detach us from France, which is Bismarck's main object, as I did not choose that Bernstorff should have to report the slightest encouragement to the suggestion, but it *may* come to that after all.

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Colonel Walker,[190] the British military attaché at Berlin, whom Lord Clarendon considered to be one of the most enlightened and intelligent men of his profession, was in London at the time, and he reported that there was not the slightest sign of any active military preparation in any part of Prussia, and that the idea of war was so much discouraged by the military authorities that it was no longer talked of in military circles, whereas formerly it had been the only topic of discussion. The manoeuvres were to be held in the Prussian provinces most remote from France, and there was a fixed determination to give the latter no cause for offence, not from fear of that country, for there was a conviction that Prussia would have the best of a war, but owing to internal difficulties. Colonel Walker added that the mutual indisposition of the North and South to each other was becoming so manifest that the unification of Germany was far distant.

This comforting piece of intelligence Lord Lyons was instructed to communicate to the French Foreign Minister.

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[187] Tamperers.
[188] Lord Augustus William Frederick Spencer Loftus, GCB, PC (4 October 1817 – 7 March 1904), was a British diplomat and colonial administrator. He was Ambassador to Prussia from 1865 to 1868, to the North German Confederation from 1868 to 1871 and to the Russian Empire from 1871 to 1879 and Governor of New South Wales from 1879 to 1885.
[189] In a manner of speaking.
[190] Sir Charles Pyndar Beauchamp Walker (1817–1894) was a soldier then a diplomat. On 26 April 1865 he was made military attaché to the embassy at Berlin, and he held that post for nearly twelve years.

The Luxemburg Railway difficulty was finally disposed of by a Commission at London, but before this took place, the Belgian Liberal Minister, M. Frère-Orban,[191] found it necessary to pay a visit to Paris.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon
Paris, April 28, 1869.

> Frère-Orban had a farewell audience of the Emperor this morning. He tells me that his Majesty was very gracious. Frère appears to have insinuated that the business was finished. The Emperor expressed a hope that something good would be done in the Commission. The Emperor dwelt upon

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> the necessity of France and Belgium being upon the best terms in order to put a stop to all the ideas of annexation which certain journals were continually putting forward. His Majesty said that the annexation of Belgium to France would be disagreeable to England, which would of itself be a reason sufficient to make him averse from it. His Majesty had on his table the Arcolay pamphlet which asserts that Prussia would be unable to defend South Germany against France. He said that in an answer to this pamphlet published at Berlin, the Belgian army was counted among the forces to act against France, and observed that France and Belgium ought to be on too good terms to render such an employment of the Belgian army possible. Frère said that His Majesty had only to make Belgium feel convinced that her independence was safe, in order to ensure her sympathy with France. Frère appears to have been much pleased with the audience on the whole, though he would rather the Emperor had said distinctly that he did not expect any result from the Commission, and looked upon the whole question as at an end. He is very well satisfied with the result of his mission to Paris, as he has placed the relations on a friendly footing, and conceded absolutely nothing.
>
> The great points now are for the Belgians not to sing songs of triumph, and for us and everybody to avoid all appearance of having exercised any pressure. The Emperor cannot safely take a snub from any foreign nation, and he feels this very strongly.

It is to the Emperor's credit that, in spite of disastrous failures, he always seems to have preserved a courteous and amiable demeanour. In this particular case, it is probable that he did not know clearly what he wanted himself, and that, misled by unscrupulous advisers, he entertained vague notions as to the possibility of annexing Belgium, and then withdrawing, as best he could, when the difficulties were realized. At all events, the sole result

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was a rebuff and an increased want of confidence in his integrity. In short, the mismanagement of this railway affair, which should never have been allowed to attain so much importance, and the collapse of his previous attempt upon Belgium, justified the sneer levelled at him by Bismarck,

[191] Hubert Joseph Walthère Frère-Orban (24 April 1812 – 2 January 1896) was a Belgian liberal statesman who served as the Prime Minister of Belgium from 1868 to 1870 and again from 1878 to 1884.

who, as recorded by Busch,[192] remarked in 1870, "He (Napoleon III.) should have occupied and held it as a pledge. But he is, and remains a muddle-headed fellow." A still more scathing definition was applied to him by his distinguished countryman, M. Thiers—*une immense incapacité méconnue*.[193]

The private correspondence in 1869 with Lord Clarendon, who was by far the most voluminous letter-writer amongst English Foreign Secretaries, contains references to many topics besides the relations between France and Prussia, such as Tunis, the Eastern Question, Spain, the internal situation in France, the inauguration of a new Prussian seaport, the Suez Canal, and a host of other subjects. Amongst these may be mentioned two projected visits of exalted personages. The Khedive Ismail[194] was expected in England, and there was some uncertainty as to how he should be treated. In the previous year he had ingratiated himself with the Sultan of Turkey by agreeing to pay an increased tribute, and as a consideration had obtained the title of Khedive and the privilege of securing the Viceroyalty of Egypt for his own family. Being of a vain and ostentatious disposition, however, he had now fallen into disfavour with his Suzerain by reason of the royal airs which he assumed and of actions which seemed to imply that he considered himself to be an independent ruler. "Pray let me know," wrote

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Lord Clarendon, "how the Viceroy is received at Paris. The Turkish Ambassador has been boring me with protestations against the royal receptions already given to him and which he fears may be repeated here. He yesterday showed me a telegram from Constantinople, saying that *l'effet serait fort regrettable*[195] if the Viceroy was lodged in the same apartment at Buckingham Palace that the Sultan occupied. He declares that this voyage through Europe is to dispose Governments favourably to recognize his independence, and that he will be backed by France against his suzerain."

Upon making inquiries at Paris it was found that the same question had been raised there, the Turkish Ambassador having made a remonstrance against the Khedive being lodged in the Elysée, and a special request that at least the room in which the Sultan slept should not be desecrated by his obnoxious vassal. The French Foreign Minister had thereupon advised the Ambassador to consider the remonstrance about the Elysée and the bedroom as *non avenue*,[196] as it could only

[192] Julius Hermann Moritz Busch (13 February 1821 – 16 November 1899) was a German publicist. In 1870 he received an appointment to the German Foreign Office, where he functioned as one of Bismarck's press agents. From that time and for many years, he was the inseparable companion and confidant of the chancellor, taking daily notes of his sayings and doings, and earning for himself the title of 'Bismarck's Boswell.' He was at the chancellor's side during the whole of the campaign of 1870–71.
[193] An immense unrecognized incompetence.
[194] Isma'il Pasha (25 November 1830 or 31 December 1830 – 2 March 1895) also known as Ismail the Magnificent, was the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt and ruler of Sudan from 1863 to 1879, when he was removed at the behest of Great Britain and France. (Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire, which normally appointed regional governors and did not allow them to become hereditary. However, from the early 19th century, when Napoleon invaded and was subsequently removed with the aid of Britain, the local governor, Muhammad Ali (4 March 1769 – 2 August 1849) an Albanian, became the *de facto* hereditary ruler of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, albeit with support from Britain and France.
[195] The effect will be very regrettable.
[196] Invalid

serve to make the Ambassador and his Government look ridiculous. Nevertheless, M. de La Valette admitted that the Viceroy was taking too independent a line, and that the proposal to neutralize the Suez Canal was an Imperial question which should originate from the Porte, and not from the Egyptian ruler.

The other and more illustrious traveller was the Empress Eugénie, who was desirous of attending the inauguration of the Suez Canal, and who unexpectedly intimated that she wished to make a tour in India. Upon this becoming known, Queen Victoria caused her to be informed that her presence in any part of the British dominions would always be most welcome, and that every arrangement would be made for her comfort and convenience.

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> "The Empress talked to me last night," wrote Lord Lyons, "for a very long time and with great animation, not to say enthusiasm, of her project of going to India. She gives herself two months away from France, during which she proposes to go to Ceylon and most of the principal places in India except Calcutta. She repeated her thanks to the Queen and to you, and said that as the Queen had never been herself to India, she herself, as a Foreign Sovereign, could not think of receiving Royal Honours, and besides, that she particularly wished for her own sake to observe the incognito and to be allowed to go about and see things in the quickest and most unostentatious manner. I told her that she had only to let us know exactly what her wishes were and every effort should be made to carry them out. She particularly begged that her idea of going to India might not be talked about, lest it should be discussed and criticized in the papers. I cannot suppose she will ever really go to India, but she is full of it now. La Valette will stop it if he can, for his own sake; for he depends a good deal upon her support at the Palace."

This journey, of course, never took place. La Valette prevented it by representing to the Empress that if she went to Suez she must also go to Constantinople, and thus sufficient time for a tour in India was not available.

A trivial incident in French high society which occurred about this time serves to show with what extraordinary facility the most exaggerated statements can be circulated and credited. Writing to Lord Lyons, Lord Clarendon stated that he had been informed that the former had been placed in a most disagreeable position at a party given by Princess Mathilde,[197] at which a recitation had been delivered marked by the most furious abuse of the English, and that the Emperor had gone up to the reciting lady and ostentatiously complimented her.

[197] Mathilde Laetitia Wilhelmine Bonaparte, Princesse Française, Princess of San Donato (27 May 1820 – 2 January 1904), was a French princess and salonnière. She was a daughter of Napoleon's brother Jérôme Bonaparte and his second wife, Catharina of Württemberg, daughter of King Frederick I of Württemberg. Princess Mathilde lived in a mansion in Paris, where, as a prominent member of the new aristocracy during and after the Second French Empire, she entertained eminent men of arts and letters at her salon.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, May 9, 1869.

> The only foundation for the story you mention is the fact that I was at a party at the Princesse Mathilde's at which a play was acted and some verses recited. The room however was so small that only the Emperor and Empress and some of the principal ladies had seats in it. The rest of the company were dispersed in other rooms. For my own part I was two rooms off, entirely out of sight and out of hearing of the performance and recitation. Among the verses was, I believe, an old ode of Victor Hugo's[198] in praise of the First Emperor. I have never read it, but I dare say it is not over-complimentary to England. I hear the Emperor was affected to tears by it, but it certainly neither placed me in an awkward situation, nor gave me any emotion, for it was out of sight and hearing, and I did not know it had been recited.

In June Lord Lyons received his first request to take part in a division in the House of Lords. As far as is known, he had never made any declaration as to his political views, but apparently he figured on the Whip's list as a Liberal or Whig, and Lord Clarendon wrote saying that the Conservative Lords had determined upon the suicidal course of throwing out the Irish Church Bill, and that as the House of Commons was "capable of anything" it was imperative to prevent such a disaster; that every vote in the Lords was of value, and that if he had no serious objection it was desirable that he should come over and vote on the second Reading. The answer to this appeal strikes one as a model of common sense.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon
Paris, June 6, 1869.

> I am very much obliged by your kind consideration in not *pressing* me on the subject of

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> coming over to vote on the Irish Church Bill. I will frankly say that I have a very strong disinclination to do so. The professional objections are too obvious to mention, and I have another feeling which would make me hesitate. I have as yet never taken any part whatever in home politics. If I ever come to live in England, I shall of course endeavour to take a political line and to be of any use I can. In the meantime I should have great difficulty in reconciling myself to the idea of now and then giving a sort of blind vote, either for the sake of party, or from deference to friends however much I might value and esteem them.

In other words, he knew scarcely anything about the merits or demerits of the Bill which he was expected to support, and was, of all men, the least inclined to give a vote on a question with which he was unacquainted. Lord Clarendon, however, doubtless much against his inclination, was compelled to return to the charge.

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[198] Victor-Marie Hugo, vicomte Hugo (26 February 1802 – 22 May 1885) was a French Romantic author, poet, essayist, playwright, journalist, human rights activist and politician. His most famous works are the novels *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) and *Les Misérables* (1862).

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons
June 12, 1869.

I am writing in the Cabinet room, and by the unanimous desire of my colleagues, to request that, unless you object to the Irish Church Bill, you will come over and give us the benefit of your vote on Friday.

It is not often that the vote of the Ambassador at Paris is wanted, and if I remember rightly, Cowley only once or twice sent me his proxy; but proxies are now abolished, and the real presence is necessary. Every vote is of importance, as the question is one of great gravity not only as respects the Irish Church but the conflict between the two Houses that is impending, and that must if possible be averted.

Gladstone has just expressed a strong opinion as to the duty of a peer not to abstain from

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voting when he is not disabled from doing so, and does not admit that diplomatic convenience is a sufficient reason against his doing so.

I hope therefore you will come over if you are not opposed to the Bill.

It being practically impossible to resist an intimation of this kind from an official chief, Lord Lyons reluctantly went over to London to vote, and as he had not yet even taken his seat, took the precaution of asking a trusty friend in the Foreign Office to find out what the necessary formalities were. The following somewhat naïve communication possesses a modern interest as it discloses the fact that backwoodsmen were as much in existence then as they are now.

Mr. Staveley to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, June 16, 1869.

Not being able to get any reliable information in the Foreign Office as to your *modus operandi* in regard to taking your seat to-morrow, I have been down to the House of Lords this afternoon and saw one of the clerks in the Crown Office, who says that all you have to do is to present yourself at the Peers' entrance to-morrow not later than 4.45 p.m., when you will receive from the clerk in attendance for that purpose the necessary writ to enable you to take your seat.

Nothing further is necessary, and many peers presented themselves and took their seats for the first time this session, for the debate of Monday last, with no further formalities.

The obvious comment on this incident is that Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were totally wanting in a sense of proportion, and their action justifies the belief that the eminent persons who govern this country are sometimes literally incapable of looking beyond the next division list in Parliament.

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If a British Ambassador is to inspire confidence in his countrymen it is all important that he should not be a partisan or dependent in any degree upon party favours. The majority for the second reading of the Bill was 33, and no fewer than 108 peers were absent from the division unpaired. Yet because the whip (probably a person of very mediocre intelligence) said that he wanted every vote that could be obtained, the Ambassador was sent for, made to figure as a party hack, and forced to give a vote on a question of which he had admittedly no knowledge, and upon which his opinion was valueless. It will be seen later that similar attempts to force him to vote were subsequently made by people who ought to have known better, but fortunately without much success.

Towards the close of April, 1869, the French Legislative Session came to an end, and with it expired the Chamber elected in 1863. The General Election took place in May, and, as an insignificant number of opposition deputies were returned, owing to the unscrupulous intervention of the Executive, the results were received with much satisfaction in Government circles. It was generally felt, however, that even the huge Government majority would be more independent than in the late Chamber, and that a very real control would be exercised over the Ministers. It was even expected by some that the Emperor would formally announce the acceptance of the principle of the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, May 25, 1869.

I understand that the result of the elections gives pleasure at the Tuileries. The Imperialists

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generally seem very well satisfied. They consider the result to be a complete defeat of the Orleanists,[199] a defeat of the Legitimists and a defeat of the moderate Republicans; the Chamber being thus divided into supporters of the dynasty and Ultra-Republicans. They think the prominence of the *Spectre Rouge* will frighten and unite the people at large, and cause them to rally round the dynasty. I cannot help being afraid that there are more *rouges* elected than is very safe, and the election of such a sanguinary socialist as Baucel[200] both at Paris and Lyons is an uncomfortable symptom. The opposition will not be inconveniently numerous, and its violence will be in all probability simply a source of weakness.

[199] Orléanist was a 19th-century French political label originally used by those who supported a constitutional monarchy expressed by the House of Orléans. The 'pure' Orléanists constituted were those who supported the constitutional reign of Louis Philippe I (1830–1848) after the 1830 July Revolution, and who showed liberal and moderate ideas. The 'fusionist' (or 'unionist') Orléanist movement was formed by pure Orléanists and by those Legitimists who after the childless death of Henri, Count of Chambord in 1883 endorsed Philippe, Count of Paris, grandson of Louis Philippe, as his successor. Bonapartists supported Napoleon's legacy and heirs
[200] Not identified.

I could not get Rouher to listen to any hint to propose to Prussia that a French vessel should be sent to Jahde,[201] though he seemed willing enough to send one if invited. You have, however, I think, entirely prevented them having any suspicion of our having been coquetting with Prussia, or having been willing to curry favour with her at the expense of France.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, May 29, 1869.

It is very generally believed that Rouher will be made the scapegoat and placed in the honourable retreat of the Presidency of the Senate. Since the great rally of the Moderates to the dynasty it has become the fashion to throw upon Rouher personally the blame of all the measures which he has had to defend. I don't know who can be found to take his place as Government orator.

Speculation is occupied in divining how the Emperor will take the elections. Some think that, finding himself in front of an opposition of *Rouges*, he will again take the part of the Saviour of Society and begin a new epoch of Cæsarism. Others, looking to the comparatively large number of independent

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members, whose elections the Government did not oppose, and to the liberal professions made even by the official candidates, expect a formal announcement of the responsibility of Ministers to the Chamber, and Parliamentary Government in form and in fact. An opinion not the least probable is that His Majesty will make no change, but appoint Ministers and direct his policy more or less in deference to the Chamber, according to circumstances.

I hope Beust's meddling in the Belgian question has been merely an awkward attempt to curry favour with the Emperor, but it may have had the mischievous effect of encouraging fresh pretensions on the part of France. Jealousy of Prussia will for a long time to come ensure sympathy between France and Austria.

The complacent feelings with which the election results were at first received at the Tuileries soon gave place to very different emotions. M. de La Valette was under no illusion as to the unimportance of a victory over the Orleanists, and had frequently assured the Emperor that they had no real backing in the country, and that His Majesty's extreme susceptibility with regard to the attention shown to the Princes of that House by the Court and by society in England was totally unnecessary. The more the elections were considered the less they were liked. It began to dawn upon the Emperor that it had been a mistake to help the Reds with a view to crushing the Orleanists or Moderate Liberals. A majority in the Chamber was indeed secured to the official candidates, but the moral weight of the votes given for them was small, for the influence of the Government had been unsparingly and unscrupulously used to secure their return, and even the official candidates had, with few exceptions, been forced to issue very Liberal addresses. Fear of the extreme men might bring the officials and the independent

[201] Now Wilhelmshafen. (LN)

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members together in the Chamber, but it was generally realized that the Government would have to go at least halfway to meet the Liberals. In short, it was difficult to conceal the fact that the elections had not resulted in a manifestation of confidence in the Imperial Government, and that they had shown that the party bent upon revolution at any price was dangerously large. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that the French Government showed itself alarmed and irritable, and although the country appeared to have declared against war there were not wanting Imperialists who would have been ready to look upon a provocation from abroad as a godsend.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, June 8, 1869.

> The elections of yesterday in Paris seem to me satisfactory, for I certainly prefer Orleanists and Moderate Republicans to Reds, and it is a great thing to be rid of all the questions Rochefort's[202] return would have produced. In the Provinces the official candidates seem to have had the worst of it.
>
> The lessons to be drawn from the general election are not pleasant, for it is impossible to find anywhere a symptom of approval of personal government. It is not that the French desire a Parliamentary government *à l'Anglaise*, but they are tired of the uncertainty and disquiet in which they are kept by the fact that peace and war, and indeed everything, depend upon the inscrutable will of one man whom they do believe capable of giving them surprises, and whom they no longer believe to be infallible. I don't like the look of things. I dare say we shall be quiet for some time, but like the French public, I live in dread of a surprise.
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> It is true that Fleury is likely to go as Minister to Florence, though it is a secret. He would keep his

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> office of Grand Ecuyer,[203] but he would go because he felt that he had lost his influence with the Emperor and would not choose to stay here only to look after horses and carriages.

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[202] This may refer to Victor Henri Rochefort, Marquis de Rochefort-Luçay (30 January 1831 – 30 June 1913) who was a French writer of vaudevilles and a politician. He was a journalist for the newspaper *Le Figaro* then started his own paper, *La Lanterne* . The paper was seized on its eleventh appearance, and in August 1868 Rochefort was fined 10,000 francs, with a year's imprisonment. In 1869, after two unsuccessful candidatures, he was returned to the *Corps Législatif*, (the then lower house of the French Parliament). He renewed his onslaught on the Empire, starting a new paper, *La Marseillaise*. The violent articles in this paper led to the duel which resulted in January 1870 in Victor Noir, being shot and killed by Prince Pierre Bonaparte. The paper was seized, and Rochefort was sent to prison for six months. Further clashes with authority during the revolution led him to flee Paris in disguise but he was caught and condemned under military law to imprisonment for life. He was transported to New Caledonia but escaped and returned to France under amnesty in 1880 where he continued to be a controversial figure.

[203] The *Grand Écuyer de France* or Grand Squire of France or Grand Equerry of France was one of the Great Officers of the Crown of France and a member of the Maison du Roi (King's Household) during the *Ancien Régime* prior to the French Revolution. The position was roughly equivalent to the United Kingdom positions of Master of the Horse and the Crown Equerry.

> I don't think his departure a good sign. He has lately been rather liberal in politics, and he is one of the few men who would be certainly true to the Emperor and brave and resolute if it came to actual fighting in the streets. The object of his mission to Florence would be to manage the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome. I have no doubt the Emperor wants to withdraw them, but he wants also to be sure that the Pope will be safe without them. I dare say, too, that His Majesty is angry about the conduct of the clergy in the elections. They voted according to their own predilections, and certainly did not make the support of the Government a primary object.

General Fleury, a man of charming personality, and a prominent figure in French society, was the author of the celebrated rejoinder, *Pourtant, nous nous sommes diablement bien amusés*,[204] upon an occasion when the Second Empire was severely criticized some years later. Lord Clarendon was another of those who felt misgivings over the elections. "I feel precisely as you do," he wrote to Lord Lyons, "about the elections and the danger of a surprise that they create. Cæsar thinks only of his dynasty, and I expect he foresees greater danger to it from responsible Government than from war. It is not surprising that the French should be exasperated at always living on a volcano and never knowing when it may burst out and what mischief it may do them. The Bourgeoisie and the *actionnaires*[205] must fear revolution, but they must be beginning to weigh its evils against those which they are now suffering from. Fleury was a friend of peace and of England, and I am very sorry that he should so much have lost his influence as to make him accept a foreign mission."

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The elections were followed by a certain amount of rioting in Paris, and some hundreds of persons were arrested, but the only effect of these disorders was to strengthen the hands of those who advised the Emperor to hold fast to absolute and personal government. The latter was quite willing to sacrifice individuals to the Chamber, and was aware of the necessity of making some concessions in a Liberal sense, but he continued to resist any extension of the power of the Legislative Body. The latter might have obtained what was desired by calm and patience, for no minister would have been strong enough to successfully withstand the demand, but it is not in the nature of Frenchmen to achieve practical successes without noise and ostentation, and it was plain that troublous times were ahead. Had Napoleon III. been wise he would have taken the bull by the horns and announced something that would have satisfied the Chamber and the country. Unfortunately, the one thing he refused to give up was the one thing which his opponents were determined to wrest from him—personal government.

In July the Constitutional agitation was advanced a stage by an important interpellation of the Government demanding that the country should be given a greater share in the direction of affairs and asking for a ministry responsible to the Chamber. This demand was very numerously signed, and much to the general surprise amongst the signatures were many names belonging to the Government majority. It was evident that the country and the Chamber were determined to put some check on personal government.

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[204] However, we had a devilish good time.
[205] French monarchist and nationalist political movement

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Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, July 7, 1869.

> We are going on here *à toute vitesse*,[206] whither, it is not very pleasant to think. A new form has been agreed upon for the famous interpellation.
>
> More than a hundred Deputies have signed the demand, and among the signatories are to be found even some of the regular courtiers, such as Prince Joachim Murat[207] and the Duc de Mouchy.[208] It is entirely illegal for the *Corps Legislatif* to discuss the Constitution, but things seem to have gone much too far for such scruples to have any weight. It would be amusing, if it were not rather alarming, to see the eagerness among men of all parties to be forward in the race towards Liberalism. Rouher preaches patience and moderation, but the Oracle from St. Cloud gives no certain response to the many votaries who try to extract a declaration of its views. This it is, which has been one of the main causes of the falling away of the Imperial Deputies. To keep the majority together, it would have been necessary that a distinct *mot d'ordre*[209] should have been given them, the moment the Chamber met. No one is willing to take the unpopular side without some assurance that he will not be thrown over by the Prince he wishes to serve; and what is worse, the want of decision shown has very much diminished confidence in the resolution and ability of the Sovereign, and consequently the willingness of politicians to throw their lot in with his. When one looks at the position in which things stood, I will not say before the election, but between the election and the meeting of the Chamber, one is astonished at the rapid descent of the personal power and the reputation. Whether concessions will come in time to enable him to stop before he is dragged to the bottom of the hill, is even beginning to be questioned.

The Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne, the French Ambassador in London, who was much astonished at the number

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of persons who had signed the Interpellation Demand, told Lord Clarendon that the French Government had brought it entirely on themselves by the scandals perpetrated at the elections. Both he and Lord Clarendon were convinced that Rouher was destined to be the Imperial

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[206] With all speed.
[207] Joachim Joseph Napoléon Murat, 4th Prince Murat (21 July 1834 – 23 October 1901) was a major-general in the French Army and a member of the Bonaparte-Murat family. His father was the second son of Joachim Murat, King of Naples, who married Napoleon's sister, Caroline Bonaparte. In 1870 he was made brigadier general and participated in the Franco-Prussian War that led to the end of the Second Empire. After the fall of Napoleon III he retired to a private life but was able to maintain the title of general and prince.
[208] Antoine Just Léon Marie de Noailles (19 April 1841 in Paris – 2 February 1909) 9th prince de Poix, from (1846) 6th duc espagnol de Mouchy, 5th duc français de Mouchy et duc de Poix, from 1854, was a French nobleman. He was the son of Charles-Philippe-Henri de Noailles (1808–1854), duc de Mouchy. He was married on 18 December 1865, to the princess Anne Murat (1841–1924), daughter of Prince Napoleon Lucien Charles Murat.
[209] Watchword.

scapegoat. In this they were correct. Rouher resigned; and La Tour d'Auvergne himself changed places with La Valette.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, July 14, 1869.

> When France enters upon a new road it is difficult to guess where it will lead her to, and revolution may be looming in the distance, but I think and hope it may be staved off for a time. The Senate will probably put on as many checks as it dares, and the Emperor will have a good many dodges for defeating his own programme, but he has proceeded so unskillfully that he must have shaken the confidence of those whose support he ought to reckon upon.
>
> He should at once, after the unmistakable verdict of the country against personal government, have made up his mind how far he would go with, or resist public opinion, and not have left his supporters without that *mot d'ordre* that Frenchmen cannot dispense with; but his silence compelled them to speak, and no one will now persuade the people that he has not yielded to the threatened interpellation.
>
> If they are once thoroughly impressed with the notion that he is squeezable they will continue to squeeze him, and the language held even by his immediate entourage is ominous. The middle-class fear of violent charges, and, above all, of the Reds, may come to his aid, but he must be sadly in want of sound advice. Rouher's retirement, even though it be temporary, is, I conclude, indispensable, but I hope the Imperial confidence will not be given to Drouyn,[210] who besides being the most untrustworthy of men, is the most dangerous of councillors. The point which concerns us most is the successor to La Valette, whose resignation Prince La Tour bears with perfect equanimity.

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The ministerial changes seemed to produce no beneficial effects as far as the Emperor's position was concerned, and the letters from the Ambassador became increasingly pessimistic.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, July 27, 1869.

> I grieve to say that the Emperor seems to lose ground. His own partisans seem more and more to doubt his having energy and decision enough to hold himself and them. What is serious is that this doubt is strong among the generals. They would stick to him if they felt sure of him, because a reduction of the army is one of the leading doctrines of his opponents. Prince Napoleon has found an occasion for having a letter published repudiating all responsibility for the conduct of the Government of late years. I have been told very confidentially that the Empress complained bitterly to the Grand Duchess Mary

[210] Édouard Drouyn de Lhuys (19 November 1805 – 1 March 1881) was a French diplomat. Drouyn was foreign minister in the lead-up to the Austro-Prussian War. He commented that, "the Emperor has immense desires and limited abilities. He wants to do extraordinary things but is only capable of extravagances."

> of Russia[211] of the inconstancy and ingratitude of the French people, and said that if the people were tired of her and the Emperor, they were quite ready to leave the country and save their son from the dangerous and thankless task of trying to content France. No one seems to apprehend any immediate danger. The general impression is that if the Senatus Consultum is a fair execution of the promises in the message, things will go on quietly enough until the meeting of the Chamber, which may be safely put off till December. The most hopeful sign to my mind is the reasonable and Constitutional way in which the French seem to be getting accustomed to work for Reforms. If the Emperor sees pretty clearly what to yield and what to keep, and will express his intentions in time and stick to them, all may go well yet. But can decision and firmness be inspired, if they are not in the natural character, or the reputation for them, if once lost, be recovered?

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In spite of the evident deterioration in Napoleon's position and of the growing distrust in him which was now universally felt, unfavourable rumours as to the state of his health caused something resembling a panic. The French funds, which were higher than they had ever been before, fell suddenly in August. They had risen because the Constitutional concessions were believed to make it certain that the Emperor would not make war: they fell because alarming reports were spread about his ill-health. As a matter of fact, he was suffering from rheumatism, and there was no real danger, but there is always a difficulty in ascertaining the truth about illustrious invalids. Much inconvenience and delay, however, were caused by his indisposition, for it seems to have been his habit to retire to bed at any hour of the day, if he felt unwell, and there was no certainty of seeing him, even when he made an appointment. As his plans depended upon his health, and as there was further a certain amount of complication caused by the projected visit of the Empress to the East, nobody quite knew what would happen, and the *joueurs à la baisse*[212] profited by the situation to bring off a big *coup* on the Bourse.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Weisbaden, Aug. 31, 1869.

> I hope the report given to you of the Emperor's health is correct. The banker has told me to-day that he had not remembered for years such a panic at Frankfort as was produced by the news that he was dangerously ill. If his illness is not serious and he soon gets well again, the fright will rather do good as making people awake to the enormous importance of his life. Even, however, if he lives, your able despatch describing the state and the prospect of affairs in France gives cause sufficient for anxiety, and I have an instinct that they will drift into a republic before another year is over.

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Had Lord Clarendon lived a few months longer he would have been able to congratulate himself upon one of the most accurate political prophecies on record, for the Republic was actually

[211] Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia (17 October [O.S. 5 October] 1853 – 22 October 1920) was the sixth child and only surviving daughter of Alexander II of Russia and Marie of Hesse and by Rhine. She was the younger sister of Alexander III of Russia and the paternal aunt of Russia's last emperor, Nicholas II.
[212] Those who speculated on a fall in the market.

proclaimed in Paris on September 4, 1870. It should be added that his voluminous letters show a thorough knowledge of and profound insight into French politics.

The political situation in France at the end of August, 1869, was, on the whole, apparently somewhat more reassuring than had been the case earlier in the year. The Emperor's message announcing a great Constitutional reform had been read in the *Corps Législatif* in July, and was followed by a general amnesty for all political and press offences. The change of Ministry was well received, because it involved the retirement of M. Rouher, the ablest supporter of the old system of government, although it was known that many eminent deputies were unwilling to take office until the Constitutional change had come into effect. The general impression produced upon the public was favourable, and although many Liberals were careful to declare that they accepted the proffered changes simply as an instalment, only the ultra-Republicans and irreconcilables affected to repudiate them and treat them with contempt. Even the latter, however, were obliged to express approval of the amnesty. Meanwhile the country had remained calm, and so far, the stream of reform appeared to be flowing swiftly and with unruffled surface. Close observers, however, were under no illusion as to the critical situation which was concealed behind these favourable appearances.

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The preservation of the Monarchy and of order in France depended as much upon the Emperor as it had done during the early years of his reign, and he was far from being as strong as then. He had been at the head of the Government for more than eighteen years, and the temperament of the French seemed to preclude the idea that they could tolerate any rule for a lengthy period. A young generation had sprung up free from the dread of the bloodshed and disorder which accompanied the revolution of 1848, and eager for change and excitement. The Emperor's foreign policy had not of late years succeeded in gratifying the national pride, nor had his recent concessions done as much as might have been expected to recover his reputation. The ultra-Imperialists believed that if he had shown resolution and decision immediately after the General Election, no reforms would have been necessary; they thought that the reforms became inevitable simply because he vacillated and gave his majority no assurance of support. The Liberals had not much belief in his good faith, and the friends of the Empire entertained a well-grounded fear that the new powers granted to the people would be used for the purpose of overthrowing the dynasty and establishing a republic. On the one hand, there was an impression that the Emperor had no longer sufficient firmness to resist these subversive attempts; on the other, the Liberals found it difficult to believe that a sovereign who had for many years exercised so directly, in his own person, absolute power, could ever be brought voluntarily to abandon it. Thus there was apprehension on both sides, and while some feared that the Emperor would be led from concession to concession until he had no power left, others feared that, finding it impossible to

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reconcile himself to his new position, he would have recourse to some violent expedient, such as war or a *coup d'état*,[213] in order to extricate himself from his difficulties.

It was generally taken for granted that the choice lay between the Bonaparte dynasty and a republic of an extreme character. The Emperor still retained some personal popularity, but he no longer

[213] The sudden and often violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group.

inspired the fear and the admiration which had hitherto prevented revolutionary attempts. His best chance seemed to lie in foreign Governments treating international questions in such a way as to enhance as far as possible his reputation, and it was certainly not to the interest of England that he should be displaced, for his own commercial policy was decidedly liberal, and it was highly doubtful whether the *Corps Législatif* would be equally so, when it came to dealing with Tariffs and Commercial Treaties.

When Lord Lyons returned from his leave in November, he found the Emperor in good spirits, full of amiable sentiments with regard to England, and very cheerful about the political prospects in France. He did not appear to know much about the Porte and Khedive question, which had for some time been giving rise to considerable trouble, but responded at once to the Ambassador's appeal to his own *amour propre* in favour of the Commercial Treaty, which seemed to be in jeopardy. The Empress had gone to the East, and he was consoling himself for her absence by giving small dances at the Tuileries for some American young ladies.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Dec. 3, 1869.

> I am more than ever impatient to settle this Khedive affair because I am afraid that I see symptoms of

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> the French Press taking up his cause against his lawful master. La Tour d'Auvergne's tenure of office is very precarious, and if he goes before it is settled, his successor is as likely as not to take the popular side, which in France is undoubtedly that of the contumacious vassal. La Tour d'Auvergne is himself uneasy, and it is apparent that it is only the desire to act with us which keeps the Emperor from taking the Khedive's side decidedly. If the Porte plays many more of these pranks, it will bring about the independence of Egypt, or a quarrel between England and France on the subject.
>
> It is in vain to draw any conclusions from the proceedings of the Deputies, or the innumerable commentaries made upon them. The Ministers profess to be delighted with the elections of President and Vice-Presidents, but then I cannot forget that they were enchanted for the first few days with the results of the General Election which produced the present Chamber. My own hope is that out of the chaos a working Liberal-Conservative majority will be developed; but who is to be the Minister? Émile Ollivier[214] seems to be losing, not gaining ground in the Chamber. If the Emperor goes straight and throws himself a little more on the classes, who, having something to lose, are naturally conservative, he may do well yet. There is certainly a return of goodwill towards him. The fear is that he may hope to strengthen himself by coquetting with his pet *ouvriers*,[215] who have so little gratitude for the really important services he has rendered them. If reproached, they answer, he has done something for us, but what have we not done for him? What I mean

[214] Olivier Émile Ollivier (2 July 1825 – 20 August 1913) was a French statesman. Starting as an avid republican opposed to Emperor Napoleon III, he pushed the Emperor toward liberal reforms and came increasingly into Napoleon's grip. He entered the cabinet and was the prime minister when Napoleon fell.
[215] Workers or manual labourers.

by coquetting with them, is trying to gain by their support, power, and popularity at the expense of the Chamber.

I can't pretend to say whether the new majority will hold together when the question of distributing the places arises; whether they will find it possible to get on with the Emperor, or (which most concerns us) whether they can and will maintain the Commercial Treaty. I am afraid we shall never again, either in political or commercial affairs, have as good times as we had under the personal power of the Emperor—by *we* of course I mean the *English*.

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With this sentiment Lord Clarendon fully concurred: the Emperor, he said, was parting with power so reluctantly that he would create distrust, but "I quite agree with you that we shall never have such good times again under a Parliamentary instead of a personal *régime*."

A few days after this letter was written, La Tour d'Auvergne and his colleagues were already anxious to resign, although the Emperor wished to retain them. It was supposed that Drouyn de Lhuys would be one of their successors: "Angels and Ministers of grace, defend us!" was the comment of Lord Lyons upon this rumour, which Lord Clarendon received with equal apprehension. Another political event at this juncture was an announcement by the Empress that she intended to keep aloof from politics in the future, and to devote herself to works of charity—an announcement which did not carry universal conviction at the time.

The Cabinet, which was in so shaky a condition, contained some nominal free traders, and it was feared, not without cause, that the new Government might denounce the existing Commercial Treaty, although La Tour d'Auvergne expressed confidence that such would not be the case. "I have my misgivings," wrote the Ambassador, sadly, "for I am afraid the country is Protectionist, and I think the Free Trade zeal in the south will cool, as they become aware that we shall not retaliate."

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Dec. 21, 1869.

Nothing but absolute force will turn French Ministers and their wives from their sumptuous

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official palaces. La Tour d'Auvergne, whom I should indeed like to keep, is really anxious to go. I don't feel sure that any of the others are. I suppose the Emperor must change the Ministry as soon as the verification of powers is over, but he has not made up his mind yet, and his hesitation is doing him harm in all ways. There is, I believe, a Conservative reaction, or rather a revival of the fear of the red spectre in the country. The Emperor may turn this to good account, if he will govern constitutionally through a Parliamentary Ministry, but it will not sustain him in a return to personal government.

I don't think things look well for the Commercial Treaty, and the notion of some Free Traders that it should be denounced on account of its origin, and with a view to making a

> greater advance towards real free trade, will probably give the *coup de grâce*[216] to it. The difficulty of passing new free trade measures through the Chamber would, I should think, be infinitely greater than that of maintaining the present Treaty.

The formation of the new Government was not actually completed before the end of the year, although the Emperor in true Constitutional fashion wrote a letter to M. Émile Ollivier in his own hand, asking him to form a Cabinet. There was a feeling that his Ministry would not be long lived, and moderate men shrank from joining it, thus playing into the hands of the revolutionary parties. Amongst those who thought that the new Government would be short-lived was Lord Clarendon—

> "Olliviers task," he wrote, "requires tact, experience, firmness, knowledge of men, and a few other qualities in which he seems singularly deficient, and I cannot think his Ministry will last. La Valette thinks that the object of the implacables is to discredit the Chamber collectively and individually, so as to make its dissolution appear a necessity; then to pass a new electoral law; then to have a General

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> Election with which the Government would be prohibited from interfering; then to have a Chamber of Rocheforts and Raspails,[217] which would be more than the *commencement de la fin.*[218]
>
> "This is rather a gloomy view, expressed confidentially, of course, and we must hope that the Emperor will be able to defeat intrigues of the existence and gravity of which he must be well aware."

As an instance of the general uncertainty prevailing, it may be mentioned that M. de La Valette, until the contents of the Emperor's letter to Émile Ollivier became known, was convinced that Imperial indecision would take the form of resumption of absolute power.

The new ministry was finally completed in the early days of January, 1870, and proved to be considerably stronger than had been believed possible. Some of the new Ministers had curious antecedents with regard to the Emperor. Ollivier himself had previously been an opponent of the Empire, and his father had been sentenced to be deported to Cayenne, while Count Daru,[219] the new Foreign Minister, had actually voted for the Emperor's impeachment. It was creditable,

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[216] A deathblow delivered to end the misery of a mortally wounded victim.

[217] François-Vincent Raspail, L.L.D., M.D. (25 January 1794 – 7 January 1878) was a French chemist, naturalist, physician, physiologist, attorney, and socialist politician. Raspail was imprisoned during Louis Philippe's reign (1830–1848) and was a candidate for presidency of the Second Republic in December 1848. However, he was then involved in the attempted revolt of 15 May 1848 and in March 1849 was again imprisoned as a result. After Louis Napoleon's 2 December 1851 coup, his sentence was commuted to exile, from which he returned to France only in 1862. In 1869, during the liberal phase of the Second Empire (1851–1870), he was elected deputy from Lyons. He remained a popular republican during the French Third Republic after the short-term Paris Commune in 1871.

[218] The beginning of the end.

[219] Napoléon, comte Daru (11 June 1807 – 20 February 1890), was a French soldier and politician. During the French Third Republic Daru was a member of the National Assembly for Manche from 8 February 1871 to 7 March 1876. He belonged to the Orléanist parliamentary group

therefore, that personal matters did not exclude men from office. What chiefly concerned England was the line which the new Government was likely to take with regard to the Commercial Treaty which was about to expire. According to the Emperor, there was nothing to fear, and he assured the Ambassador that he had come to an understanding with Ollivier on the subject, but it was ominous that several members of the Cabinet were ardent Protectionists, amongst them being the Minister of Public Works. In conversation the Emperor spoke cheerfully about the political situation, quite in the tone of a Constitutional

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Monarch. The Empress, on her side, declared that she had no *caractère politique*[220] in the State, and enlarged on the enormity of the attacks in the press upon a person so entirely without political position, attacks which were certainly odious, and generally directed to matters unconnected with politics. As for the Ministers, they all praised the Emperor, and declared that their relations with him were perfectly Constitutional and satisfactory; everything seemed going smoothly until the death of the journalist Victor Noir[221] at the hands of Prince Pierre Bonaparte once more threw politics into confusion. After a certain amount of rioting, however, and much trouble caused by Rochefort, things resumed their usual condition for the time being.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Jan. 18, 1870.

> I am one of the hopeful, and I see or fancy I see signs of the success of the present Ministry in their attempt to found Parliamentary Government. But people are very uneasy, and the tactics of the Revolutionists are to keep up an agitation enough to paralyze trade, and make the peaceably-disposed think that the present Government is not strong enough to be worth having. These manoeuvres might lead to a resumption of personal power, which would be almost as dangerous as a republican revolution.
>
> People seem to find it difficult to believe that the Emperor will abstain from intriguing against his Ministers. They say it is in his nature to do so, and remind one that he set up a newspaper against Rouher. The Ministers themselves, on the other hand, seem to be thoroughly satisfied with His Majesty. Daru says that he and his colleagues are confident of success; that they would have two or three difficult months to pass, but that they expect to have convinced the Republicans by that time

[220] She kept aloof from politics.
[221] Victor Noir, born Yvan Salmon (27 July 1848 – 11 January 1870), was a French journalist. In December 1869, a dispute broke out between two Corsican newspapers, the radical *La Revanche*, inspired by Jean François Paschal Grousset (7 April 1844 – 9 April 1909) a French politician, journalist, translator and science fiction writer and the loyalist *L'Avenir de la Corse*, edited by an agent of the Ministry of Interior named Della Rocca. It led eventually to a duel being planned between Grousset and Prince Bonaparte. Victor Noir was a second for Grousset and went to make arrangements with Prince Bonaparte instead of with his seconds. There was an altercation in which Bonaparte referred to Grousset's seconds as menials and then shot Noir dead. There are various different accounts of the incident. Noir became a symbol of opposition to the imperial regime.

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> that a revolution is hopeless. He spoke with great satisfaction of the complete adhesion of the middle class at Paris to the Ministry, and of the offers they make of their services in case of need.
>
> Claremont saw the Emperor this afternoon. He thought His Majesty looking fat and heavy. He found an opportunity of making a remark to him on the necessity of the Ministry being supported by the Chamber, which seems to have been taken in good part.
>
> I hear on good authority that the Empress professes to find much greater good than she expected in the Parliamentary Government, and that she says the Pierre Bonaparte affair would have been much more disastrous under the old system. Several of the new Ministers and their wives appeared last night at a ball at the Tuileries for the first time since 1848. The Empress, as well as the Emperor, was particularly gracious to them.

It may be mentioned in connection with the Tuileries balls, that the Ambassador used to receive very numerous applications from persons in English society who were desirous of being invited to these entertainments, and it was usually not possible to satisfy their wishes. After the fall of the Empire, this particular species of application practically disappeared, there being apparently no overwhelming anxiety to attend the Republican social functions.

Before the end of January an important debate took place in the Chamber on the Commercial Treaty, M. Thiers appearing as the chief Protectionist champion. Free Traders professed to derive some encouragement from it, as a vote against the denunciation of the Treaty was carried by 211 to 32; but it was obvious that these figures could not be taken as a test vote of the strength of the Free Trade and Protectionist parties, since the votes of the majority were influenced by a variety of considerations.

CHAPTER VII

SECRET PROPOSALS FOR DISARMAMENT (1870)

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It will be remembered that in October, 1868, the French Government had practically suggested that Her Majesty's Government should "give advice" to Prussia on the subject of disarmament, and that Lord Stanley, who was Foreign Secretary at the time had resolutely declined to do anything of the kind. A fresh effort was now made in the same direction, no details of which, so far as is known, have ever been made public.

Mutatus mutandis,[222] there was a curious similarity between the language held at Paris and at Berlin respectively. The French proclaimed that they would not go to war with the Prussians, provided the latter did nothing objectionable. The Prussians replied that they did not want to go to war with France, provided they were allowed to do as they pleased, and both asserted that the maintenance of peace depended upon England, which they explained by affirming that England had only to declare that she would join against whichever Power broke the peace; the real meaning of this being that at Paris it was expected that England should announce beforehand that she would

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side with France in case of war, while at Berlin it meant that she should announce beforehand that she would side with Prussia.

Early in January it had become known to the British Government, and presumably also to the French Government, that Bismarck intended to create a North German Empire, and that the King of Prussia was by no means disinclined to become an Emperor, and it may have been this knowledge which prompted the French Government to make another attempt to induce England to suggest disarmament. It was felt that the only chance of success was to set about the work as quietly as possible, and if there was one individual who was better fitted than any other to undertake this delicate task it was undoubtedly Lord Clarendon, who, as has already been pointed out, was on intimate terms with the principal personages concerned. Lord Clarendon was approached in January by La Valette, the French Ambassador, and consented to make the attempt.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, Jan. 26, 1870.

> I had a long talk with La Valette to-day about disarmament. It is no new subject to me, but one which I have long had at heart, although it presents serious difficulties on account of the King of Prussia's obstinacy. He does not meditate, or desire war—far from it. But his army is his idol, and he won't make himself an iconoclast. Not so the Crown Prince, with whom I discussed the subject at great length a year ago. Our relations with Prussia are very friendly, and perhaps we are in as good a position as any other Power to make an

[222] With things changed that should be changed

attempt to bell the cat,[223] and Count Daru may be sure that I will do all I can to meet his views, but I am sure that he will admit that some tact and *ménagements*[224] are necessary.

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I spoke to Gortchakoff in the summer about Prussian disarmament, and he entirely concurred, though he said Russia would take no initiative.

Further letters from Lord Clarendon emphasized the necessity of keeping the matter secret, and authorized Lord Lyons to assure the French Government that it would not be compromised in any way, and that he undertook the business with hearty good will, but with small hope of success, as the King of Prussia was almost unapproachable on the subject of the army.

On January 30th, M. Émile Ollivier called upon Lord Lyons.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Jan. 30, 1870.

I have just had a visit from M. Émile Ollivier and we have spoken confidentially on several subjects.

The thing uppermost in his mind was Disarmament. He said he was very anxious that England should exert her influence with Prussia. He explained the position of the present French Ministers with regard to the subject. They depended, he said, principally on the great agricultural population of France for support against Socialism and Revolution. It was essential therefore that they should do something for that population. To conciliate them, either taxes might be remitted or the call upon them for recruits be diminished. There were great difficulties in the way of remitting taxes, and when a reduction of the army was proposed, the Ministers were met by the Emperor and the military party with a declaration that it would be unsafe to diminish the forces of France, while those of Prussia were on their present footing—that the effect would be that Prussia would make some attempt on Southern Germany, and war be the consequence. If, however, Prussia would make a simultaneous disarmament, all would, he thought, be well and a great security for peace would be given. It was

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true that the Prussians urged that their army was on a peace footing already, and that they could not be expected to change their whole military system, but M. Ollivier conceived that while no doubt the Prussian system enabled the Government to call nearly the whole male population to arms, it depended upon the Government to decide how many it would actually call upon each year.

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[223] This expression derives from one of Aesop's fables about mice wishing to put a bell on a cat's neck to warn them of its approach. The term has become an idiom describing a group of persons, each agreeing to perform an impossibly difficult task, under the misapprehension that someone else will be chosen to run the risks and endure the hardship of actual accomplishment.
[224] Care

I explained to M. Ollivier the difficulty and delicacy of the question, the peculiar views of the present King of Prussia, and the small hope there could be of prevailing upon His Majesty to consent to a reduction of the army. I said that it would be your special care that the French Government should not be compromised by any step you might take. I added that it was plain that the only chance of success was to approach Prussia in a strictly confidential manner; that any formal diplomatic move on our part would be resented or misrepresented as a pretension to interfere in the internal affairs of the country, and would expose France as well as ourselves to a rebuff.

M. Ollivier said that he was extremely grateful to you, and that he entirely concurred in the opinion that the move must be made in a cautious and confidential manner. He was particularly alive to the importance of not exposing France to the appearance of being slighted; in fact, he would not conceal from me that, under present circumstances, a public rebuff from Prussia would be fatal. "*Un échec*," he said, "*c'est la guerre*!"[225] Those who had to render an account to Parliament and the country were less able than the former Government to put up with any wound to the national pride. Their main object was peace, but they must show firmness, or they would not be able to cope with Revolution and Socialism at home.

M. Ollivier went on to say that, whether we succeeded or not at the present moment, it was very necessary that the way should be paved for disarmament in Prussia, and that it should be felt that England was in favour of it. The time must come when France would be obliged to make a public proposal to Prussia to disarm: it was impossible that the French Government could assume, in the

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eyes of France and the world, any share of the responsibility for the present exaggerated armaments and expenses. They would be obliged to show the French people and the German people too where the responsibility really lay. The best course would be to avoid, by a confidential arrangement for simultaneous action, the necessity of claiming special praise for either party, or throwing special blame on either. If this could not be, the next best thing would be that Prussia should be prepared to receive, in a proper spirit, a proposal from France, and the confidential steps you thought of would, in his opinion, certainly be likely to effect so much at least.

He spoke with great affection of the Emperor, and assured me that H.M. acted in the most perfect harmony and confidence with his new Ministers, and that no difficulty had arisen on any subject, though the Ministers had maintained and were determined to maintain their independence and their authority as the responsible Government of the country.

An opportunity for Lord Clarendon's good offices presented itself very soon; Count Bismarck had written a despatch to the Prussian Minister in London in which he alluded in complimentary terms to the friendly interest which Lord Clarendon had always shown in the welfare of Prussia, and the latter made this an excuse for communicating his views on disarmament, the method selected being

[225] Failure means war.

a memorandum which Lord Augustus Loftus[226] was directed to bring to Bismarck's notice in strict confidence.

In communicating to Lord Lyons a copy of this memorandum it is instructive to learn that the British Cabinet Ministers, with one exception, were kept in ignorance of Lord Clarendon's action. "I have," he wrote on February 3, 1870, "mentioned the matter only to the Queen and Gladstone, both of whom highly approve. The Queen will

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be ready to write to the King of Prussia whenever I think her doing so may be useful. You will be able to assure Daru that I have in no way compromised the French Government."

The memorandum which, it was faintly hoped, might impress the flinty-hearted Bismarck ran as follows:-

Lord Clarendon to Lord A. Loftus.
Foreign Office, Feb. 2, 1870.

> A few days ago, Count Bernstorff read to me a despatch from Count Bismarck concerning the German Confederation which contained some allusions to myself that gave me particular satisfaction, as a proof that Count Bismarck recognized the sincerity of my interest in the welfare and greatness of Germany.
>
> If I am not mistaken in this I hope he will not think that I abuse the confidence he seems disposed to place in me by asking him privately through you to consider a subject that I have long had at heart, and in making this request, it is, I am sure, unnecessary for me to disclaim any intention to interfere in the internal affairs of Prussia—such an intention would be alike presumptuous and useless.
>
> But it is in the general interest of Europe, of peace, and of humanity that I desire to invite the attention of Count Bismarck to the enormous standing armies that now afflict Europe by constituting a state of things that is neither peace nor war, but which is so destructive of confidence that men almost desire war with all its horrors in order to arrive at some certainty of peace—a state of things that withdraws millions of hands from productive industry and heavily taxes the people for their own injury and renders them discontented with their rulers. It is a state of things in short that no thoughtful man can contemplate without sorrow and alarm, for this system is cruel, it is out of harmony with the civilization of our age, and it is pregnant with danger.

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> To modify this system would be a glorious work, and it is one that Prussia, better than any other Power, might undertake. She would not only earn for herself the gratitude of Europe, but give a great proof of her morality and her power; it would be a fitting complement of the military successes she has achieved.

[226] British Ambassador at Berlin. (LN)

> I know full well the difficulties that would beset such a course of policy. I know how great and deserved is the King's parental feeling and affection for his army—that he would view its reduction with pain, and that he might not think it safe to diminish its numerical force; but His Majesty is wise and foreseeing, and his moral courage is always equal to the measures he believes to be right, and should Count Bismarck think it not inconsistent with his duty to recommend a partial disarmament to the King, I cannot but consider that the moment is a singularly propitious one for the purpose.
>
> The great standing army of France would of course come first under the consideration of the King, but France has been never more peacefully disposed than at the present time, under a responsible Government which cannot make war *for an idea*, because it represents a nation that is determined to maintain peace so long as there is no just cause for war, and because the Emperor entirely shares the feelings of his people. I know that the present Government of France will seek for popularity and power in a peaceful policy and in economy, notwithstanding the vast and increasing wealth of the country and the almost proverbial indifference of the people to taxation.
>
> There would consequently, I am convinced, be no opposition on the part of the French Government to a reduction of the army *pari passu*[227] with Prussia. For reasons, however, quite intelligible, neither Government may choose to take the initiative in such a proposal; but if I had authority to do so, I do not doubt that the Queen would allow me to sound the ground at Paris, in a manner entirely confidential, that should in no way compromise either Government, whatever might be the result of the suggestion.

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> Pray read this letter to Count Bismarck with the sincere expression of my esteem.

With all due respect to Lord Clarendon, this lecture (for that is what it amounted to) betrayed some want of appreciation of the real situation, for he seems to have regarded the Prussian army as largely the plaything of the King, and not to have fully realized the great object for which it was intended. Were he alive at the present day his moralizings on the iniquity of armaments would presumably be still more condemnatory. Lord Lyons's comment on the communication was, that if the Prussians would not listen to Lord Clarendon, they would certainty not listen to any one else, but he so little expected success that he regretted that the French Government had raised the question at all. If, he pointed out, the Prussian Government would not agree to disarm, the new French Ministers would be very angry and might turn round and say, "If you will not disarm, you must mean ill towards us, and we would rather fight it out at once, than ruin ourselves by keeping up, for an indefinite time, war establishments." No doubt it would be an excellent thing if Prussia would take the opportunity of disarming while the French Government and the French nation were in the mood, for the happy moment might pass away, and war might again be looked upon as a remedy, though a desperate one, against socialism and revolution. Evidently he had small belief in the efficacy of the step.

The forebodings entertained both by Lord Lyons and by Lord Clarendon himself were very shortly

[227] At an equal rate.

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realized. In a few days there arrived from Lord Augustus Loftus a long letter reporting his conversation with Bismarck, from which the following extracts are quoted separated by breaks.

Lord A. Loftus to Lord Clarendon._
Berlin, Feb. 5, 1870.

I read your private and confidential letter to Count Bismarck.

* * * * *

He first observed that he should wish to know what guarantee you could give, or propose should be given, for the maintenance of peace, or the security against danger. "You," he said, "live in a happy island and have not to fear an invasion. For 250 years Germany has been exposed to and suffered French invasion; no one can accuse us of being aggressive; Germany, as now constituted, has all that she wants, and there is no object of conquest for her. But our position," he added, "is an exceptional one. We are surrounded by three great Empires with armies as large as our own, any two of whom might coalesce against us." He then reverted to March of last year. He said that he was aware that at that moment, had it not been for the influence of M. Rouher, an occupation of Belgium would have taken place. Although there had been no direct understanding with England, it was felt and known at Paris that Prussia would have supported England, if action had been taken. It was this knowledge that warded off action, and Belgium was saved. He had not at the time mentioned the imminence of the danger to the King, for he was afraid that His Majesty would have taken military measures which would have rendered the situation more critical. He then observed that in 1867 he had had a conversation of several hours with the Emperor Napoleon. He had discussed with him the causes which had led to the overthrow of Louis XVI, Charles X, and Louis Philippe—that their fall was owing to want of energy and decision. He had told the Emperor that, when he was travelling in

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dangerous company, the only thing to do was to have a revolver in his pocket. The Emperor had adopted this principle; he had the army with him, especially the Guards; but Bismarck observed that lately one or two cases had occurred which proved that the army was beginning to be tainted with socialism. Bismarck said that the Emperor had had but two courses to pursue; either to grant more internal liberty, or war; and the Emperor had told him very clearly that if the one failed, there could be no other alternative. "Now," said Bismarck, "this danger occurred only 10 months ago, and who can say that it may not occur again?"

He then went into an account of the hostility of the Muscovite party towards Germany: of the dislike of the Cesarewitch[228] to everything German, adding that whenever the Emperor Alexander[229] dies, the relations will undergo a great change.

* * * * *

He expressed a hope that you would say nothing at Paris on this subject, as any refusal of Prussia to a proposal of disarmament would make the position more dangerous.

He said that he did not dare even to name the subject of your letter to the King, much less show it to His Majesty. He would get into a fury and immediately think that England was trying to weaken Prussia at the expense of France; nor was the present a judicious moment to do so, for the King had only lately known what had taken place about Belgium, and had in consequence expressed his cordial feelings towards England. If the proposition came from France, the King would view it as a ruse, but would not listen to it. Coming from England, said Bismarck, it would make the worst impression on him.

I used all the arguments I could in support of your suggestion, and read to him certain extracts from your other letter.

* * * * *

In conversation Bismarck remarked that Prussia might have acquired South Germany

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without cost and risk, had she pleased to do so, by which I understood him to refer to the cession of Belgium to France.

* * * * *

I left your letter marked "confidential" in Bismarck's hands, as I thought it essential that he should reflect over the powerful arguments it contains, but he expressly declined to lay it before the King. He will answer it through Count Bernstorff. It is evident to me that there is not the smallest chance of inducing the King to listen to a reduction of his army, and I must fear that any proposals to him of this nature would only make him suspicious and distrustful of England.

In spite of the view expressed in the last paragraph, it may fairly be presumed that Bismarck's alleged fear of the King of Prussia was a shameless fabrication. There is nothing whatever in subsequent revelations to show that he stood in any awe of "Most Gracious," and the latter appears to have always been a more or less passive instrument in his hands.

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[228] The eldest surviving son of Alexander II was the Cesarewitch or Czarewitch. Named Aleksandrovich Romanov (10 March 1845 – 1 November 1894) he became Emperor of Russia, King of Congress Poland and Grand Duke of Finland from 13 March 1881 until his death in 1894.

[229] Alexander II of Russia (29 April 1818 – 13 March 1881) was Emperor of Russia, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Finland from 2 March 1855 until his assassination in 1881.

In forwarding this correspondence to Lord Lyons, Lord Clarendon observed that his suggestion appeared to have been a complete failure, and that Bismarck was evidently just as hostile to the idea of disarmament as his royal master. Lord Lyons was directed to communicate the substance of the correspondence to Count Daru, but only in general terms, as when Bismarck's answer arrived in London, fresh light might possibly be thrown upon the subject.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, Feb. 11, 1870.

When I went to see Daru yesterday he opened the conversation by telling me that he had

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received a letter from La Valette, from which he learned that Count Bismarck had refused to consent to your suggestion that Prussia should disarm. Three reasons were, Count Daru said, given by Count Bismarck, none of which appeared to have any weight.

The first was that he could not even mention the subject to the King. This device had, Daru said, been resorted to by Count Bismarck in the affair of Luxemburg; in fact, it seemed to be the usual mode which the Count took of avoiding any discussion which he did not like; it was however the duty of Ministers to bring wholesome proposals before their Sovereign, whether the proposals were palatable or not. In fact, Daru seemed to think that if Count Bismarck himself desired to disarm, he would be able to obtain the consent of the King.

The second argument was that the neighbours of Prussia need not be uneasy at her military strength, because she was not a conquering Power. This, Count Daru thought, might have been said with reason, if Prussia had made no acquisition since 1815; but to say so now, he declared, to be simply preposterous. Prussia had shown herself to be a particularly ambitious Power, and her ambition had been already extremely successful. For his own part, he rather admired than blamed her desire to aggrandise herself, but he could not be expected to listen seriously to an assertion that her power was no cause of alarm because she was not a conquering nation.

Count Bismarck's third argument was that Prussia was not nearly so ready for war as France—that, in fact, she had only 300,000 men under arms, while France had upwards of 400,000. This, also, Count Daru thought, simply ridiculous. Prussia could, he said, at any moment, without an act of the Legislature, without a law, without even a Royal Decree, by a simple order of the Minister of War, call an immense force into the field, a force, too, of trained men, at a moment's notice. There was nothing in France like this.

Daru went on to say that Count Bismarck's arguments did not at all mend the matter. France must act as if Prussia had simply refused to disarm. How was this state of things to be dealt with?

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"I have determined," said Daru, "to disarm, whether Prussia does so or not. In fact, I have resolved to ask the Emperor at once to sanction a considerable reduction of the French army. I cannot make this reduction as large as I should have done, if I had more satisfactory accounts of the intentions of Prussia. All I can propose, is to reduce the annual French contingent from 100,000 men to 90,000. As our men serve nine years, this will eventually effect a reduction of 90,000 men—a real absolute reduction. I shall thus give a pledge to Europe of pacific intentions, and set a good example to Prussia. I shall probably add great weight to the party in Germany which demands to be relieved from military burdens, and, I trust, enlist public opinion everywhere on my side. I shall also furnish Lord Clarendon with a powerful argument, if, as I sincerely hope, he will persevere in his endeavours to work upon Prussia. I beg you to give my warmest thanks to him for what he has already done, and to express to him my anxious hope that he will not acquiesce in a first refusal from Prussia."

Daru went on to say that it appeared that Count Bismarck had been so little aware that your suggestion had been made in concert with France that he had particularly requested that the French Government might not be made acquainted with it. He begged me to express particularly to you his gratitude for the care you had taken not to compromise the French Government.

He concluded by saying that he could not at the moment say for certain that the reduction would be made in the French army, because the Emperor's sanction had not yet been given. He was afraid His Majesty would not relish the proposal, but he felt confident that His Majesty would accept the advice of his Ministers.

I told him that my personal opinion was that the best chance of obtaining a disarmament in Prussia was to set a good example and leave public opinion in Germany to work without foreign aid. Demands from abroad for disarmament seemed to me likely to irritate the King in Prussia, and to

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give him and the military party grounds for an appeal to national patriotism against foreign dictation. I thought that the effect of the disarmament of France in strengthening the feeling in Germany against military burdens would be very great if it were not counteracted by appeals which might wound German susceptibilities.

Daru seemed to agree generally with me, but not to be willing to say anything which would pledge him to abstain from calling officially upon Prussia to disarm, if it suited the home policy of the Ministry to do so.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Feb. 12, 1870.

Daru seems to have taken Bismarck's refusal better than I expected. We have not, however, got the definitive answer which is to come through Bernstorff, and as Bismarck kept a copy

of my letter I have little doubt that he will show it to the King, though he pretended to be afraid of doing so.

* * * * *

Count Daru may be sure that I shall not let the subject drop, though I shall wish to proceed in it as I think most prudent. I have only mentioned it to Gladstone among my colleagues, and of course, to the Queen, who takes the warmest interest in the matter. I had a letter from her yesterday, expressing a hope that the French Government would not at present make any official *démarches re*[230] disarmament, as she is sure, from her knowledge of the King's character, that it would do more harm than good. I am quite of the same opinion and think it would arouse German susceptibility, which is quite as great as the French, whereas we want to make German opinion act in our behalf.

Nothing is more likely to bring over Germany than France partially disarming without reference to Prussia, and I sincerely hope that this project of Daru's will be carried out. The Germans will be

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flattered by it as a proof of confidence, and it will furnish them with a fresh weapon against their war Budget.

Lord Clarendon's statement that he meant to persevere in his efforts afforded much gratification to Count Daru. With regard to Lord Clarendon's desire that the matter should be kept as secret as possible, he explained that he had confined the knowledge of it as much as possible to himself, Lord Lyons and La Valette, but that of course he had been obliged to mention it to the Emperor and to Ollivier, and he "seemed to be rather afraid that neither of these important persons would be perfectly secret."[231]

Bismarck's reply to Lord Clarendon did not afford much ground for hope.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, Feb. 19, 1870.

The day before yesterday, Bernstorff brought me Bismarck's answer to my letter, and I enclose a translation.

It is courteous, but the intention not to disarm is manifest. I have been detained so late at the Cabinet that I cannot write a letter for you to read to Daru, so I have marked Bismarck's letter, and you can extract the passages in the shape of a memorandum which you can leave with Daru in the strictest confidence. I should much like to hear what he will think of it, in order to shape my reply.

[230] Diplomatic moves regarding disarmament.
[231] Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon, Feb. 18, 1870. (LN)

Bernstorff, who evidently spoke from a private letter of Bismarck's that he did not show me, laid much stress upon the active ill-will of Russia whenever the present Czar is gathered to his fathers—the present Cesarewitch and the Slav races are very hostile to Germany—(I believe this is true), and

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this hostility would be encouraged, according to Bismarck, if German means of resistance were weakened, it would invite coalition, under circumstances easily imaginable, between Austria, Russia, and France against Prussia—hypothetical cases of this kind are easily invented to support foregone conclusions, but there is a *sort* of opening as to a conference between Powers as to proportionate reductions and exchange of guarantees. I don't mean to lay much stress on this, nor should I think that it would be productive of a practical result, but you might allude to it as a sign that the negation is not absolute.

Pray, however, lose no time in correcting the error into which Daru has been led by La Valette as to an official despatch or a speech in Parliament from me. I cannot conceive how he made such a mistake, for I said nothing of the kind.

Bismarck's answer was of considerable length, and is quoted in full because it is a document of historical interest. It will be observed that it was in the main an amplification of the views expressed verbally to Lord Augustus Loftus a fortnight earlier, and that it contained specious arguments designed to impress upon Lord Clarendon the entirely unaggressive nature of Prussian policy. The belief, however, of Lord Clarendon and of the French Ministers, that Bismarck entertained no suspicion as to how the proposal originated, implies a simplicity on their part which he must have thoroughly enjoyed.

Translation of letter from Count Bismarck to Count Bernstorff.
Berlin, Feb. 9, 1870.

Lord Augustus Loftus has read to me a private letter addressed to him by Lord Clarendon on the 2nd Inst. Its object is to discuss with me in a manner strictly private and confidential a plan for the partial disarmament of the Continental Powers. After a few friendly expressions concerning myself, which I

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cordially reciprocate, the English Statesman proceeds to enlarge upon the hardships and burdens imposed on the Nations of Europe by their excessive armaments;—He conceives that it would be much to Prussia's credit and well worthy of her great military renown if she were to co-operate in endeavouring to alleviate those burdens; he thinks that the King our August Master, sincerely attached as he is to his army, would not shrink from the adoption of such a measure, provided he were convinced of its justice;—he deems the present moment peculiarly fitted for making this overture, on account of the peaceful disposition of all the Powers and more especially of the Emperor Napoleon and of his present Government; and he states his readiness, provided he can count on our friendly assistance, to sound the Emperor and his Government with a view to eventually opening negotiations on the subject.

The English Ambassador has doubtless sent home a report of the Verbal answers which I gave to the above communication.—In order, however, to meet the confidence reposed in me by Lord Clarendon in a similar spirit, I feel called upon to address you in a manner equally confidential, and one which for that very reason admits of my speaking with the utmost frankness.

Lord Clarendon cannot doubt, as indeed the opening observations in his letter plainly shew, that I render full justice to the friendly feelings and intentions which he entertains towards Prussia and the North German Confederation.

I am convinced that no European State or Statesman exists who does not wish to see the feeling of confidence strengthened and Peace maintained; and further that no German Government would wish to impose upon its people the maintenance of an army in excess of that proportion for which the requirements of its safety imperatively call.

Were the question officially put to us whether the diminution of our military strength is compatible with the secure maintenance of our independence, we should not decline to share in any deliberations which might take place on the subject; and we should carefully sift the question whether the great

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neighbouring Military Powers are willing or able to give us guarantees such as would compensate Germany for the decrease in the amount of Security which She has hitherto owed to her armies.

Lord Clarendon does His Majesty the King full justice when he infers that no considerations or feelings of a purely personal nature would deter him from adopting a measure which he had once recognized as right and proper, but Lord Clarendon will as readily understand that however willing we may be to enter into a strictly confidential interchange of ideas on this important question, we must reserve to ourselves the Right of making a careful estimate of the relative position of the Parties most deeply interested in the matter, and of judging whether the concessions which we ourselves might probably be expected to make stand in a fair and just proportion to those which it would be in the power of other Nations to make. Our very geographical position is itself wholly different from that of any other Continental Power, and does not of course admit of comparison with the insular position of Great Britain. We are environed on all sides by neighbours whose military strength is of such a nature as to form an important element in all political combinations. Each of the other three great Continental Powers is on the contrary so placed that at least on one of its frontiers it is not open to a serious attack, and France is so situated as to be practically secure from danger on three sides. These three Powers have of late years considerably increased their military strength and have done so in a proportion in excess of our own:—Austria and France have remodelled wholly their military systems, so as to be able to assail us at any moment with increased forces. The armies of Austria, France and Russia, have each an army which, when on a Peace footing, is superior in numbers to our own. Our system is moreover so to speak so thoroughly transparent, that any increase in our effective force can at once be appreciated; the amount of any addition

or decrease which we may make in our military force can therefore be most accurately calculated.

The military systems of other Nations are of a different nature. Even in the case of nominal

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Reductions they admit of the maintenance or renewal of their full effective strength; they even admit of a material increase of force being made without attracting notice or at all events without entailing the possibility of proof.—With us on the other hand, the whole military system, which from its very nature is a matter of publicity, becomes more so owing to the nature of our Institutions.

Under these circumstances, and in the event of a discussion on measures of such great importance being actually opened, we must ask ourselves what guarantees can be given to us that our Position as regards other Powers will not be practically impaired by our signifying our adherence to a system, which however just and even-handed it might appear in its action, would in reality not deal with equal fairness with all the Parties concerned.

Any weakening of Prussia's Power, any disturbance of the balance of Power in Europe, can hardly be for the interest of England. It must be acknowledged that whilst, on the one hand, the state of preparation for War of the Great Powers gives rise to apprehension, as set forth in Lord Clarendon's letter, still that very state of preparation may on the other prove a practical guarantee that any attempt to assail or to disturb existing Rights will be firmly and effectively met.

Of this I conceive that the past year has afforded fresh proofs, and Lord Clarendon, intimately acquainted as he is with the Events of that Period, will be best able to judge of the truth of my Remark.

The maintenance of Peace has not been due merely and solely to pacific views entertained by Rulers personally, for the Power and readiness of neighbouring states has had great weight in affecting opinion and in determining Resolutions. The Inclinations of a Nation may be essentially peaceful, they may rest on a keen appreciation of its own interests, but they are nevertheless liable to be suddenly changed either by some unforeseen accident, or by fictitious agitation. Under such circumstances, neither the most powerful Monarch, nor the most influential Minister is able to estimate or to guarantee the duration of peaceful Inclinations.

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I am persuaded that when you submit these Remarks for Lord Clarendon's consideration, he will not see in them a Refusal to enter into the Views which he has so happily and eloquently set forth, but rather as the expression of the very serious responsibility which rests with a Minister who is called upon to advise his Sovereign in a matter pregnant with such important consequences.

> I can of course have no objection to your reading this letter to Lord Clarendon, I must however ask you to make the communication in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the character of thorough privacy with which Lord Clarendon, with Great Tact and to my entire Satisfaction, has invested the matter.

Bismarck's views, as set forth above, were communicated by Lord Lyons to Count Daru on February 22, and the latter remarked that, upon the whole, matters were rather better than he expected, as there was no categorical refusal to consider the question of disarmament. In his opinion, that question was a very simple one. The military forces of the great Continental Powers bore a certain proportion to each other; in order to maintain that proportion, very heavy burdens were imposed upon each country, but if, by common agreement, each reduced its army by a certain number of men, the same proportion would be preserved, while the burdens were alleviated. If, however, a minute discussion of guarantees and securities were began, very awkward topics might be brought forward. For instance, the right of Prussia to garrison Mayence, was, to say the least, doubtful, and the fortifications she was erecting on the North Sea might give rise to comment. At this stage of the conversation, Lord Lyons hastily intervened in order to point out the extreme disadvantage of mixing up Mayence and the

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North Sea with the question of disarmament, and Count Daru concluded by saying that he was quite content to leave the matter entirely in the hands of Lord Clarendon, as nobody else could manage it so well.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 12, 1870.

> Outsiders are not always good judges, but it seems to me that Ollivier makes enemies unnecessarily and gives certain pretexts to the Imperialists, who of course work on the Emperor's mind against his Government. I fear there will be a split one of these days.
>
> I agree with you that Prussia will never declare that she will not complete the unity of Germany, because she looks upon it as inevitable. Nothing, as the King himself said to me, can prevent the gravitation of the weak towards the strong, but that it would not take place in his life, possibly not in that of his son.
>
> France, if not grown wiser by that time, will probably consider it a *casus belli*,[232] but I don't see that it would make much difference to her, as the whole military force of the South is now actually at the disposal of the Confederation, and she would weld all Germany together as one man if she attempted by force to prevent Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden from joining the North, when they had determined that it was for their own interest to do so.
>
> I have fired another shot at Bismarck about disarmament, but I don't expect better success from it than from the first. The King of Prussia, a little time ago, told the Duke of

[232] Cause for war.

Oldenburg,[233] who pressed him on the subject, that he would disarm if other Powers did the same, so he is not so completely unapproachable as Bismarck would lead us to suppose.

Lord Clarendon's second attempt upon Bismarck was made on March 9, and took the form of a lengthy letter to

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Lord Augustus Loftus, in which the arguments in favour of disarmament were reiterated and endeavours made to convince Bismarck that Prussia had really no cause for uneasiness.

Lord Clarendon to Lord A. Loftus._
Foreign Office, March 9, 1870.

I have delayed writing to request that you would convey to Count Bismarck my cordial thanks for the courtesy and frankness with which in a private letter dated Feb. 9th, he answered my letter to you on the subject of partial disarmament.

The delay has been occasioned by my endeavours to ascertain correctly the relative forces of the great military Powers, and I hope that Count Bismarck will not consider that I trespass unduly on his time and his confidence if I again revert to a subject which more than any other I have at heart, and which an English Minister may have some claim to discuss without suspicion of his motives, because England is not a military Power, but is deeply interested in the maintenance of peace, and the progress and prosperity of the Continent.

I am as convinced as Count Bismarck himself can be that no German Government would wish to impose upon its people the maintenance of an army in excess of that proportion for which the requirements of its safety imperatively call, and I would not desire the reduction of a single regiment if I thought it would impair the independence and the honour of Prussia, which in their plenitude I regard as essentially beneficial to Europe.

But can it be honestly affirmed that the power and independence of Prussia are menaced from any quarter? and, if not, surely the military force of Prussia is excessive and entails upon other countries the unquestionable evil of maintaining armies beyond the requirements of their safety.

The only countries from which, owing to geographical position, Prussia could anticipate danger are Russia, Austria, and France, and can it be said that from either there is any real

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cause for apprehension? In the conversation I had with Count Bernstorff, when he communicated to me the letter of Count Bismarck, he dwelt at some length upon the ill-will of Russia towards Germany, which might take an active form on the death of the

[233] Peter II (Nikolaus Friedrich Peter, 8 July 1827 – 13 June 1900) was the reigning Grand Duke of Oldenburg from 1853 to 1900. He claimed hereditary parts of the Duchy of Holstein after the Second Schleswig War in 1864.

present Emperor, and for which Prussia ought to be prepared, but Count Bismarck must know better than myself that Russia has long since, and wisely, ceased to aim at influence in Germany or intervention in German affairs, and that all her energies are now directed eastwards with a view of extending her territory and her commerce in Asia. Whatever sentiments may be suggested in other quarters by a rapid development of the present policy of Russia which has the entire support of public opinion in that country, it appears certain that Germany can have no danger to guard against from Russia, whatever may be the personal feelings or opinions of the reigning sovereign.

On paper, and only on paper, Austria has an army of 800,000, but she could not, even on the most pressing emergency, bring 200,000 men into the field. Her finances are dilapidated and her internal disorganization affords just cause of alarm. Danger to Prussia from Austria must, for many years to come, be a chimera.

The military peace establishment of France is nominally greater than that of Prussia; the former being 400,000 and the latter being 300,000; but the number of troops stationed in the costly and unproductive colony of Algiers is not, and cannot ever be less than 60,000 men; other colonial possessions require military protection, and as the garrisons in Lyons and other great towns necessary for the maintenance of order are not less than 40,000 men, the establishments of the two countries are as nearly as possible upon an equality. Can this state of things be regarded as a menace or a danger to Prussia? I am greatly mistaken if any Prussian statesman or General would reply to this inquiry in the affirmative.

The question then to my mind appears quite simple. The military forces of the great Continental Powers have a certain proportion to each other; in order to maintain that

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proportion, very heavy burdens are imposed upon each country, but if by common agreement, each reduces its army by a certain number of men, the same proportions will be maintained, while the burdens, which are fast becoming intolerable will be alleviated.

Count Bismarck however thinks that if the question of diminishing the military strength of Prussia is entertained, it will be necessary carefully to inquire what guarantees can be given by neighbouring Military Powers in compensation to Germany for a decrease in the amount of security which she has hitherto owed to her armies.

Upon this I would respectfully beg to observe that a minute discussion of guarantees would be endless and dangerous. The legitimate rights and precautionary measures of independent Governments would be analysed in a spirit possibly of unfriendly criticism, and if agreements were arrived at, constant vigilance over their faithful fulfilment would be necessary, and this might possibly give rise to the quarrels that the agreements were intended to avert, and which would at once put an end to the compacts.

It is upon a dispassionate consideration of the probable course of events that the question of partial disarmament should in my opinion be decided, and in France (the only country with which we need concern ourselves) what do we find? A nation resolutely pacific: a

Government depending on popular support and therefore equally pacific: a responsible Minister declaring that France will not interfere with the affairs of her neighbours, and the Sovereign willingly assenting to a diminution of one-tenth of the annual conscription without asking for reciprocity on the part of Germany, and thereby showing his confidence in the King's declaration.

I venture to think that the present state of opinion in France, founded as it is upon a true estimate of French interests, is a more solid guarantee than any that the respective governments of France and Germany could effect for their own security.

Count Bismarck will admit, and I am sure that a statesman so liberal and far-sighted will admit without regret, that the people everywhere are claiming and must obtain a larger

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share in the administration of their own affairs, and that, in proportion as they do so, the chances of causeless wars will diminish. The people well understand the horrors of war, and that they, and not their rulers, are the real sufferers: they equally understand and will daily become more impatient of the taxation for those costly preparations for war which in themselves endanger peace, and I believe that there is at this moment no surer road to solid popularity for Government than attending to the wants and wishes of the people on the subject of armaments.

I have reason to know that the reduction in the French army would have been carried further if the Government could have hoped that the example would be followed by Prussia. Sooner or later, however, this reason will be publicly assigned, and then upon Prussia will rest the responsibility not only of maintaining so large a force herself, but of compelling other countries reluctantly to do the same.

It would be to me a matter of most sincere pleasure to think that no such responsibility will rest on Prussia, but I should hardly have presumed to recur to the subject if I had not gathered from the patriotic letter of Count Bismarck that further discussion was not absolutely precluded, and I had not therefore been encouraged to hope that he might think it proper to make my suggestions known to his Sovereign.

Bismarck's reply to this exhortation was equally long, and contained some arguments of such a puerile nature that it can hardly be believed that he expected them to be taken seriously.

Lord A. Loftus to Lord Clarendon._
Berlin, March 12, 1870.

On the receipt of your private letter yesterday morning, I asked for an interview with Count Bismarck, and he received me last evening.

I first observed that you would have hardly ventured to recur to the subject of disarmament, had you

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not thought that his letter to Count Bernstorff abstained from putting a veto on discussion, and from a feeling that the King of Prussia would reap general esteem and admiration in Europe by giving a patent proof of his Peace Policy, whilst on the contrary, His Majesty might incur unpopularity if the French should be enabled to say that they were compelled by Prussia to keep up an armament against which the Nation is disposed to protest. I then read your letter to Count Bismarck. He listened with great attention, merely making two observations during my reading--

1st. That France had only 40,000 men in Algeria, and 2nd that the Constitutional Government in France was only of three months' existence, and therefore its stability could not be yet said to be ensured. When I had finished, Count Bismarck stated that, as far as France alone was concerned, Prussia and the North German Confederation might not feel themselves endangered by a diminution of the Army, but he said Austria and France might join together and even the 250,000 men which you give to Austria might in conjunction with France prove to be a serious embarrassment to Prussia. The 20,000 men which might perhaps be dispensed with, would then be just the balance which might turn the Scale against Prussia.

He then reverted to France. He said although the Nation was now pacific, you know as well as I do that a war cry may be raised in France, on any emergency, and at the shortest notice.

If, said Count Bismarck, the present Constitutional Government had been three years instead of three months in existence, then there would be some chance for its duration and for the maintenance of Peace. At the present moment, he observed, there was a party anxious to restore the former state of things, a personal Government. Amongst that Party, there was the Empress Eugénie, and they would not be sorry to divert the public attention from home affairs by raising some question of Foreign Policy.

He said that the Provincial Press of France (and he reviewed articles from all the Small Provincial Papers) teemed with abuse against Prussia.

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There were other indications in Europe which did not leave him without some disquietude for the maintenance of Peace.

He first alluded to the local provincial Press in France as continually preaching antagonism to Prussia, then to certain reports which had reached him of the purchase of horses in France, but to these he did not attach much importance. He then referred to reports he had received from the Prussian Minister at Copenhagen, who observed, that if any State of larger dimensions were to do what Denmark was now doing, some sinister design would evidently be attributed to it.

He considered the appointment of Monsignor Klazko[234] by Count Beust to a post in the Foreign Office at Vienna as significative of the intentions of Austria, and he observed that Count Beust was intriguing with the Polish Party for some object which was not clear to him. He then referred to Southern Germany and to the intrigues of the Ultra-Montaine party, and cited a saying of the late Prince Schwarzenberg[235] "that the three Empires (France, Austria, and Prussia) should unite against the Heretics in Europe."

To these observations I replied that the Safety of Prussia was secured by her Military system which supplied necessary reserves and Landwehr, without the incubus of such an enormous standing army, and that Prussia was therefore in a position to be able to give an example to Europe.

On the whole, although Count Bismarck appeared to be somewhat incredulous as to the pacific appearance of Europe, he was less decidedly opposed to any disarmament than on the last occasions I spoke to him. He asked whether it was desired that he should mention the subject to the King. I replied in the affirmative, and suggested that he should have your Lordship's two letters translated and submitted to His Majesty.

On my mentioning that any attempt at mutual guarantees would be very unadvisable, he said that without some guarantee the question of entertaining disarmament would be difficult; but he said it more as a passing observation than as a fixed decision.

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I am afraid that if the question of disarmament is entertained at all (and probably neither the King nor Count Bismarck will like to discard it entirely) it will be hedged round with so many conditions, that it will be rendered impossible; great care will be required that the question of disarmament shall not become a question of Contention, and thus give a pretext for discussion, to be followed perhaps by war.

I asked Count Bismarck casually what foundation there was for the repeatedly recurring reports of General Fleury's attempts to bring about a Russo-French Alliance.

Count Bismarck said that General Fleury on his arrival had acted without instructions, and he attributed no importance to these reports.

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[234] Julian Klaczko (6 November 1825 – 26 November 1906) was a Polish author, proficient in Hebrew, Polish, French, and German. In 1869 he moved to Vienna, and was in 1870 elected Privy Councillor ('Hofrat') at the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Austria-Hungary. He was also a member of the Galician Parliament (1870–71) and later of the Imperial Parliament, the Reichsrat. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 he agitated intensely for an Austro-Hungarian intervention on the French side.

[235] This may refer to Karl Philipp, Fürst zu Schwarzenberg (or Charles Philip, Prince of Schwarzenberg; 18/19 April 1771 – 15 October 1820) who was an Austrian military commander. Schwarzenberg served as a diplomat for the Austrian Empire and later went on to serve as Austrian ambassador to Russia and also represented Austria at the Congress of Vienna. His son, Friedrich, Prince of Schwarzenberg (30 September 1800 – 6 March 1870) who was a soldier but not a diplomat, had died only a week before this letter so Bismarck was probably referring to his father as the *late* Prince.

He said that at first the Emperor of Russia had rather been taken in, and that he had written a letter to the King of Prussia (he did not say on what subject), but that the King of Prussia had replied in a manner most satisfactory and agreeable to the Emperor, and that it was then that the Emperor of Russia sent the St. George to the King of Prussia.

I could see that Count Bismarck has no fear of the Russian policy towards Prussia, so long as the Emperor lives and that Prince Gortchakow remains Minister.

I shall see Bismarck later, and will then inform you what view the King takes of the proposal for disarmament.

This unpromising communication was transmitted to Paris, and Lord Clarendon comforted himself with the thought that there was still a ray of hope, as Bismarck had promised to bring the matter before the King, and there might therefore be an opportunity of recurring to it later on. Daru, too, did not look upon the position as hopeless.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, March 17, 1870.

I read to Count Daru this afternoon a memorandum giving a short summary of the principal points in Lord A. Loftus's letter to you of the 12th about disarmament.

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He said that on the whole the impression made on his mind was good. There was more disposition to consider the subject, and Count Bismarck seemed rather to have sought to find something to say against disarmament, than to have alleged reason which could be supposed to have any real weight with him.

At all events, Count Bismarck mistook the state of France. The people were honestly and sincerely pacific, and the Constitutional system might be considered as firmly established. He would not deny that the French were a proud and susceptible people, and that they could be roused to war by their Government, if their honour or their patriotism were appealed to. But the present Government were as pacific as the people, and they had the full confidence of the Emperor and the nation—of the nation, he said, not of the *Corps Législatif*, whose support was not cordial—nor of the Senate, which did not like them—nor of the countries, who hated them. Count Bismarck would see in a few days, a series of measures which would convince him that Constitutional Government was irrevocably established in France. The Ministers had obtained, or were on the point of obtaining, His Majesty's sanction to reforms which would convince all the world that the Emperor had not only landed on the shore of Parliamentary Government, but had burnt his ships behind him.

As to Count Bismarck's argument that Prussia must be prepared to face the united armies of France and Austria, Count Daru remarked that it was preposterous to maintain that any one Power of Europe must endeavour to be a match for all the rest united. If Austria united with France, Prussia might find allies also. It was not to be supposed that all Europe would

stand by and look on at a fight with France and Austria on one side and Prussia on the other.

Finally, he repeated that on the whole, Count Bismarck's language was more satisfactory than it had yet been.

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The conclusion to be drawn from this conversation is that Count Daru must have been more easy to please than most people; but all hopes were shortly dashed to the ground when a letter arrived from Lord Augustus Loftus reporting the result of his further communications with Bismarck.

Bismarck stated that Lord Clarendon's letters had been translated and laid before the King, and that the proposal had not been favourably entertained by His Majesty. There were only two methods of reducing the German Army, one to change the present legislative enactments, and thereby the whole military system; the other, to reduce the term of military service to two and a half years. The first was considered to be impossible, and, as for the second, the King had resisted Parliament on the subject for five years, and now declared that he would rather give up his throne than yield. Further, the King viewed the proposal as being put forward in favour of France and French policy, and without regard to the safety of Prussia. To use Bismarck's own expression: "It was the act of a *cool friend*." "It is all very well for you," said Bismarck, "living in an island, where no one can attack you, to preach disarmaments, but put yourselves into our skin. You would then think and act differently. What would you say if we were to observe to you that your navy was too large, that you did not require so many ironclads, that you lavished too large a portion of the taxation of the country in building ships, which in the peaceful disposition of Europe were not required? If we recommended you to diminish your naval armament?"

To this home-thrust the Ambassador made the somewhat unconvincing reply that as evidence of our pacific disposition

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we had just sold an ironclad to the Prussian Government, and were ready to sell others—a reply which was received with irreverent merriment; neither do the imposing sentiments expressed respecting the general happiness and prosperity of Europe seem to have made much impression upon the man of blood and iron. The utmost that could be obtained from him was a vague statement that the whole question would be discussed by the Parliament "in a year or so," and that a decision must then be taken as to what was required for the safety of the country. "I saw," wrote the Minister sadly, "that it was useless to pursue the question further." Lord Clarendon realized that the game was up.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, March 23, 1870.

I send you a copy of Loftus's letter, and you will, I am sure, agree with me that more harm than good would be done by further pressing the question of disarmament, after the very decided expression of the King's opinion. You can tell Daru in mild terms the two objections raised by His Majesty and that, on the whole, I consider it better to wait and not

> to show much anxiety until the War Budget comes to be discussed next year, when the example of France, as regards military reductions, the pacific temper of her people, and the consolidation of her institutions, cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on the Federal Parliament. At present, it seems that the Liberal party, upon which Bismarck must lean more and more, would only support reduction on the condition that he would change his policy and invite, or coerce the South into the Confederation. Bismarck on this subject has behaved with prudence, at the expense of popularity, as regards Baden[236] (the sorest point with the French), and he should not be pressed into a course he dislikes or thinks dangerous to the continuance of good

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> relations with France. He is foolish about the press and always irritated by articles, however worthless, against Prussia, which he usually thinks are written by authority, or are the true manifestation of public opinion in the particular country.
>
> You will observe that the King thinks I have been acting in the interest of France, and it is therefore not only on public grounds, but as regards myself personally, that I am very desirous that the most complete secrecy should be observed respecting the whole of these unsuccessful negotiations, if they can be so called. I know well the suspicious character of the King, and if he thought that we had cast in our lot completely with France, he would straightway set about a more intimate alliance with Russia which would not be for the interest either of England or France.
>
> Pray therefore impress upon Daru the necessity of complete discretion.

Thus ended an attempt in the success of which no one probably felt much confidence. Various conclusions may be drawn from the correspondence quoted above. There seems to have been no doubt that the French Government (whatever may have been the sentiments of the Emperor) was sincerely anxious for a partial disarmament and the promised reduction of the annual contingent by 10,000 men was evidence of good intentions. There was, however, an essential difference between the French and Prussian view as to what constituted conquest and aggression which in reality precluded any real settlement.

Prussia held that it was not conquest or aggression to annex any German States, while France considered that the annexation of any States south of the Maine would be as much conquest or aggression on the part of Prussia, as it would be, on the part of France, to annex them herself. Prussia refused to declare that she would not complete the unity of Germany. France, on her side, refused to declare that she would not interfere to prevent it.

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[236] The Grand Duchy of Baden was a state within the German Confederation until 1866 and the German Empire until 1918, succeeded by the Republic of Baden within the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany. From 1945 to 1952, South Baden and Württemberg-Baden were territories under French and American occupation, respectively. They were united with Württemberg-Hohenzollern to form the modern Federal State of Baden-Württemberg in 1952.

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As for Bismarck's arguments against disarmament, some of them were positively grotesque, and it must have required more than ordinary assurance to contend, for instance, that Denmark and Monsignor Klazko constituted a menace to Prussia, whilst the artifice of representing the King as a sort of uncontrollable despot was too thin to deceive any one of ordinary intelligence. On the other hand, Bismarck seems to have displayed commendable patience and restraint when lectured on the iniquity of the Prussian military system. Lord Clarendon's language rather conveyed the impression that England stood upon a moral pinnacle which entitled her to admonish other nations as to the errors of their ways, but the claim was vitiated by the fact that she maintained, and intended to maintain, a navy of overwhelming strength, while if her military power was even more insignificant than it is at the present day, the cost of the British Army amounted to much more than that of the Prussian Army, and therefore the less said about unproductive expenditure the better. If, in fact, the respective expenditure of the two countries upon armaments is borne in mind it seems almost incredible that Lord Clarendon should have ventured to preach economy to the Prussian Government. During the previous year, the total British expenditure upon armaments amounted to no less than twenty-four millions and a quarter. Of this sum, rather more than fourteen millions were allotted to the Army, and nearly ten millions to the Navy. Now the total military and naval expenditure of the North German Federation at the same period only amounted to ten millions eight hundred

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thousand pounds, and the Prussian contribution towards the total represented a little over seven millions. It might also be added that England was quite ready at all times to supply to an unlimited amount, ironclads, rifles and munition of war to any foreign customer, however depraved. And yet we are pained and surprised when any one suggests that we are occasionally hypocritical!

But the most striking conclusion to be drawn from the correspondence is that Lord Clarendon, with all his knowledge of continental politics, does not seem to have fully grasped the really essential fact; he seems to have thought that by professions of friendship, by small concessions on the part of France, and by the establishment of more liberal institutions in that country, the threatened danger might be averted, whereas it was the fixed and inexorable determination of Bismarck to force a conflict upon France whenever the favourable opportunity should arise. A high tribute to Lord Clarendon's statesmanship was, however, paid by Bismarck at a later period. On making the acquaintance of one of his daughters a few years later, he opened the conversation with the singular remark that, never in the whole course of his life, had he been so relieved as when her father died; and then proceeded to explain that had Lord Clarendon lived, there never would have been a Franco-German war. As he did not enter into details, it may be presumed that he considered Lord Clarendon's influence to be so great that he might have successfully persuaded the French to acquiesce in some insignificant enlargement of Prussia.

All the participators in the disarmament negotiation appear to have kept their counsel on the subject, and there is, at all events, no mention of it in the two standard works which deal with Bismarck's career.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR (1870)

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Whilst the barren disarmament negotiations were proceeding, the internal political situation in France had not improved. Though calm on the surface, a section of the people was becoming more socialistic, and socialism produced stagnation in business, a desire on the part of the lower classes for revolution and a corresponding desire on the part of the middle classes for a strong government again. Ministers were uneasy, for although the new Constitution had been well received by the country at large, its weak point lay in the right reserved by the Emperor of appealing to the people, a right which nothing could induce him to abandon, and which he was about to exercise by submitting the recent Constitutional changes to a plébiscite. Theoretically, this should have afforded gratification to the Republicans, as being in conformity with their view that the public should decide everything directly itself, but they were in reality well aware that the French people were not yet Republican in sentiment.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon._
Paris, April 5, 1870.

There is a good deal of uneasiness in the French political world. The great thing for the

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moment is that the Ministers should get a good majority in the Chamber at the end of the debate on the new Constitution which is now going on. They are afraid that some of their usual supporters will abstain from voting. The "Appeal to the People" is so thoroughly Napoleonic an idea, and so completely in accordance with the peculiar character and modes of thinking of Napoleon III, that it would be very hard to make him give it up. One cannot wonder at people's being distrustful of the use he may make of it. The submitting the present changes in the Constitution to a plébiscite is certainly legally necessary and admitted to be so by all parties. What people are afraid of is that the Emperor will insist upon calling for it in a Proclamation so worded as to make the acceptance by the people a vote in favour of his person, as against the Chambers and Ministers.

You will see from Claremont's report that the Government has agreed to reduce the military contingent by another 10,000 men, making it 80,000 instead of 90,000 as the present Government proposed, and instead of 100,000, as it was fixed by the late Government.

It was not surprising that the French Ministers, as well as many other people, should feel suspicious about the plébiscite, and that frequent councils should have taken place at the Tuileries with the object of inducing the Emperor to consent that in future no plébiscite should be submitted to the people unless it had first been voted by the two Chambers. For one thing, it was feared that few people would care enough about it to take much trouble to vote, and it really did not seem very probable that a peasant would take a long walk to express his opinion on the question of whether the Senate should have the power of originating certain laws. Therefore the Ministerial crisis

which arose, and the Emperor's determination not to yield about the Appeal to the People, were attributed to

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a Machiavellian plot on his part, and it was believed that the return to personal government was to be brought about by getting rid of the independent Ministers, Ollivier included. The belief was possibly unfounded, but the Emperor's previous history had not inspired his people with implicit confidence in him, and they were always convinced that he had an incurable taste for conspiracy.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, April 13, 1870.

> It is impossible not to feel very uneasy about the present state of things in France and the sort of *locus standi*[237] that the enemies of the Empire have obtained for suspecting the Emperor, who will be a long time in recovering, if he ever does, the public confidence he now seems to have lost. Revolutions are not made with half measures, any more than with the proverbial rose water, and among the ships that the Emperor was supposed to have burnt behind him when he landed on the Constitutional shore, the plébiscite ought surely to have been included. No doubt he would have divested himself of a favourite weapon, but he should have foreseen the very serious objections to it that would arise in the mind of the most moderate friend of Constitutional Government, and he would have done far better for himself to have given it up and taken his chance, for with or without plébiscite, that is what he is now reduced to, and his chances will be improved by endeavouring with sincerity to guide the stream rather than oppose himself to it.

As the result of the crisis, both Daru and Buffet[238] left the Ministry, thus weakening the Cabinet and diminishing materially the chance of a quiet and satisfactory establishment of Parliamentary Government. Thiers was

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generally supposed to have been the principal mischief-maker. Lord Russell was at this time in Paris, and in conversation with Ollivier the latter expressed himself most confidently about the plébiscite, and thought that if six million people voted it might be looked upon as a decided success. Another opinion on the plébiscite was volunteered by Mr. Gladstone. "If the Emperor is really stickling for the right to refer when he pleases to the people for an Aye or No upon a proposition which he is to frame, that, in my opinion, reduces Constitutional Government to an absolute mockery, just as it would reduce to a shadow the power of a Legislative Assembly."

[237] *Locus standi*, or standing, is legal principle determining who can bring a case before a court.
[238] Louis Joseph Buffet (French: 26 October 1818 – 7 July 1898) was a French statesman. He was one of the supporters of the 'Liberal Empire' of Émile Ollivier, and was finance minister in Ollivier's cabinet from January to 10 April 1870. He was president of the National Assembly from 4 April 1872 to 10 March 1875, minister of the interior in 1875, and Prime Minister of France from 1875 to 1876.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, April 21, 1870.

The prospects of the quiet establishment of Constitutional Government are in some respects better and in some worse. They are better inasmuch as men of property, bankers, and others, are giving money and exerting themselves to obtain a decided success for the Plébiscite. They are worse, inasmuch as the suspicion of the Emperor's intentions appears to increase, and people become more and more afraid that if he gets a really large majority on the Plébiscite, he will revert to personal government. The imprudent language of the Right and their undisguised avowal of their hopes produce this feeling. The Emperor himself has neither said nor done anything to warrant it.

Ollivier asked me what progress had been made in the disarmament question. I made him understand, without going into details, that it must be let sleep for the present, and he agreed immediately.

There is a hitch about the English evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on the *Régime Parlementaire*. The Committee have proposed that only one English witness shall be heard. Émile

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Ollivier will do his best to put things straight. I told him that if a proper and courteous answer was made to our tender of evidence, I would undertake that we would not abuse their civility by asking for too much of their time.

Émile Ollivier dines with me to-day, and will, I hope, learn and profit by Lord Russell's instruction in Constitutional Government.

English manufacturers were naturally desirous of putting their case before the Parliamentary Committee on the Commercial Treaty, but the members of the Committee did not appear equally desirous of hearing them. According to Lord Lyons, who, like all his official contemporaries, was in principle a Free Trader, and felt compassion for the misguided economics of continental nations, the majority of the Committee were infected by a politico-economical heresy which took the form of demanding that any advantages which foreign manufacturers might enjoy, should be balanced by import duties, which they persisted in calling "compensation." His advice was that any English witnesses who might be called, should confine themselves very closely to facts and not allow themselves to be led into discussions on trade principles, "as it is not easy to reply in French to a Committee, of which the anti-Free Trade members are much hotter than the Free Traders."

As the date of the plébiscite drew near, Ollivier's confidence and satisfaction continued to increase, but some discomposure was caused by the hostile action of Thiers and his friends. No one had ever expected that Thiers would long endure that any Government of which he was not a member should go on smoothly, and in the present

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instance, he was able to establish a plausible case by protesting that the Emperor, in reserving the right to appeal to the people, was nullifying liberal institutions. At an opportune moment, however, a plot against the Emperor's life was discovered, in which a man named Beaury[239] was concerned, and although of small importance, it was considered likely to produce a considerable effect upon public opinion.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, May 6, 1870.

> I thought Émile Ollivier rather out of spirits yesterday, or at all events not so confident as he is usually. He seemed to hope the publication of the details of the plot would produce a great effect and increase the "Ayes" for the Plébiscite. That there really was a plot is certain, but it may be doubted whether the conspirators were numerous enough, or were men of sufficient note, to make the danger so great as to frighten the voters. I am not surprised at La Valette's being out of spirits, for the situation is really very critical, and it is difficult to conceive any ending which will place him and Rouher where they were again.
>
> With reference to Loftus's despatch, I sincerely hope that his most confidential correspondent is not so well informed as he represents himself to be, and that no change is really contemplated in the *status quo* of Hesse and Baden. It would be quite a mistake to suppose that this is a moment at which it would be safe to defy France. On the contrary, a war unmistakably provoked by Prussia, would be hailed by many as a welcome diversion from internal difficulties. So far as I can judge, *Ollivier is not the man to shrink from one*. There is more security against a sudden surprise than there was under the personal government, but there is also less probability that the Emperor's health and personal views will prevent war.

The plébiscite took place on May 8, and an ecstatic note from Ollivier announced success.

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M. E. Ollivier to Lord Lyons.
Paris le 9 mai, 1870.

> La Victoire est complète!
>
> A Paris nous avons gagné cent mille voix, et jusqu'à présent voici les resultats.
>
> Oui 6,189,506 Non 1,305,881

[239] The Artificial Intelligence program *Claude Sonnet 4* abstracted information from the several pages on the site https://www.heritage-images.com that Camille Beaury was a deserter who was arrested in 1870 in connection with a plot to assassinate Emperor Napoleon III. Beaury was notable for his 'intimacy with Gustave Flourens and numerous other Republicans' and was thought to be implicated in a plot against the established Government.

manquent 37 arrondissements, l'armée, la marine, l'Algérie.[240]

The complete returns showed that about 7,250,000 voted "Yes," and 1,500,000 "No." The Minister was thus justified in his satisfaction. Nearly all the big towns, including Paris, had voted against the Government, as had been expected, but on the other hand the agricultural population had showed itself to be practically unanimous in favour of the Empire. One of the disquieting surprises was provided by the Army, no less than 50,000 votes being recorded against the Emperor. Riots, as usual, broke out in Paris after the voting was over, but were suppressed without difficulty. In connection with these riots an ingenious but discreditable device, was resorted to for the purpose of seducing the soldiers in the Prince Eugène Barracks, these having been supplied by the Republicans with *bons* (orders for free admission) on the neighbouring houses of ill-fame,[241] on the presumption that the holders of these orders would feel peculiarly aggrieved at being confined to barracks.

The general impression created was that a large majority was safer than a moderate one would have been, and much safer than a very small one. This was the view entertained by Lord Clarendon, who had always considered the plébiscite to be a great mistake, but was now anxious to make the best of it, and instructed the Ambassador to

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congratulate Ollivier and to express the hope that he would be able to surround himself with Liberal Ministers determined to keep order. An Empire based upon soldiers and peasants could not be said to be placed on a solid foundation, and no effort should be spared to enlarge the basis.

The Imperial success at the plébiscite produced a sycophantic outburst amongst the diplomatists at Paris, and a movement was promoted by the Nuncio[242] and Prince Metternich,[243] the Austrian Ambassador, with the object of asking for an audience, and offering the collective congratulations of the Diplomatic Corps to the Emperor. The ineptitude of the proposal was evident.

Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, May 12, 1870.

> I wish the flunkeyism of the Nuncio and Metternich was displayed in some other way than congratulating the Emperor on the success of his foolish Plébiscite. It is an improper interference in the internal affairs of France, which, if allowed, would justify a remonstrance of the Diplomatic Corps against some measure they disapproved; but, of

[240] The victory is complete. In Paris we have gained a hundred thousand votes and here are the results so far. Yes: 6,189,506. No 1,305,881. Missing, meaning not yet counted, are 37 administrative districts, the army, navy and votes from Algeria.
[241] Brothels.
[242] Flavio Chigi (Rome, 31 May 1810 – Rome, 15 February 1885) was an Italian Catholic Cardinal, Archbishop and Nuncio. From 1861 to 1873 he was Apostolic Nuncio to France.
[243] Richard Klemens Josef Lothar Hermann, 2nd Prince of Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein (German: Richard Klemens, Fürst von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein; 7 January 1829 – 1 March 1895), usually known as Richard von Metternich, was an Austrian diplomat and the eldest surviving son of the diplomat Klemens, Prince of Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein.

> course, we can neither oppose nor abstain, and it will be well for you to join cordially. But I hope there will be no expression of opinion in favour of the Plébiscite, or recognition of it as a component part of Constitutional Government. We should be justly condemned if we joined however indirectly in any such opinion. I asked La Valette this morning whether such congratulations would be agreeable to the Emperor, and he answered, with a shrug of the shoulders: "*Il a le gout des compliments.*"[244]

Upon further consideration Lord Clarendon decided that it would be unwise if the British representative took any

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part in the proposed joint congratulation, as it was foreseen that it might provoke awkward discussions in the House of Commons. Lord Lyons was therefore directed to inform Ollivier at once, that, much as the British Government sympathized with the Emperor and his dynasty, no worse service could be done to him than by offering compliments upon his success. He would at once be attacked for having invited or rather tolerated intervention in the internal affairs of France, and the Queen of England, in an analogous case, could not possibly accept such an address from foreigners as that would imply a sort of right to interfere which might prove extremely inconvenient. The Emperor would gain much more with the nation by courteously declining to receive foreign opinions upon his own acts and the domestic affairs of France, than by any assurance that Foreign Governments were united in approving a measure about which there existed a considerable difference of opinion in France. These views were to be communicated to Ollivier in a friendly manner with the assurance that they should be brought to the Emperor's notice.

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
Paris, May 19, 1870.

> I think we are well out of the scrape of the collective congratulations. The notion was Metternich's and the Nuncio only came into it to a certain degree, lest his refusing to do so should give offence. So far as I know, the Nuncio has behaved very well, and has not brought *us* forward, but has simply told Metternich that he found the Diplomatic Corps generally cold on the subject, and therefore thought it better not to go on with it. Metternich appears to have acquiesced. I have not seen him; he was out when I called, which was, I think, lucky; and we have not met.

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> There is a Ball at the Tuileries on Monday, at which I shall probably have a chance of saying something pleasant to Cæsar. I shall be careful to keep within the terms sanctioned by Mr. Gladstone. We may at any rate rejoice at the establishment of Parliamentary Government in France, and hope, till we have evidence to the contrary, that the means provided for upsetting it will not be resorted to. The present Plébiscite was undoubtedly technically necessary to the legality of the new Constitution, and as such was insisted upon by Daru and other Liberals. Let us hope it will be the last.

[244] He likes compliments.

> I have received the usual invitation in the name of the Emperor to the function on Saturday evening. I must not leave the Embassy in darkness if everybody else illuminates, but I think the idea a foolish one, as being likely to give rise to street riots.
>
> Two of the new Ministers are unknown to fame, but their appointment is a relief to those who apprehended appointments from the Right. There is no remarkable speaker in the Ministry except Ollivier himself.
>
> Gramont[245] called upon me yesterday and was profuse in expressions of friendship to England, to you, and to me.

The appointment, however, of the Duc de Gramont could hardly have been in the nature of a relief, for, as far back as the beginning of 1868, when Ambassador at Vienna, he had announced that he considered a Franco-Prussian war unavoidable.

The formal announcement of the result of the plébiscite was made to the Emperor on May 21, in the Salle des États of the Louvre, and must have been one of the last, if not the very last, of the brilliant ceremonies which marked the reign of Napoleon III. It was attended by all the dignitaries of the realm, the Senators, the deputies,

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the civic functionaries, the Diplomatic Corps; an imposing array of troops filled the Place du Carrousel; and Cæsar himself, elevated upon a dais, replied to the congratulations offered to him by the Chambers in a speech full of those resounding and occasionally meaningless phrases which invariably meet with a responsive echo in an assembly of Frenchmen. It was, in fact, the final coruscation of the Imperial fireworks, and, in the prosaic words of Lord Lyons, "the ceremony went off extremely well."

Lord Lyons to Lord Clarendon.
May 24, 1870.

> I made a little speech to the Emperor about the Plébiscite at the ball last night. I did not in fact go as far as Mr. Gladstone allowed, but what I did say appeared to be to His Majesty's taste. At all events he was extremely gracious and cordial. I don't know that any one except the Prussian Ambassador has asked for a special audience to deliver congratulations, but I have not made inquiries, because I neither wished to put it into my colleagues' heads to do so, nor to appear as if it seemed to me the natural thing to do. All seems to be quite right with the Emperor and Empress, so far as H.M. Government, and you in particular, and I am concerned. He has been a good deal annoyed and disappointed by the tone of the English press. After all, he has established a Constitutional form of Government, more democratic than that which exists in England, and the worst way to encourage him to persevere is to assume at once that he does not mean to do so. Selfishly, we ought to

[245] French Ambassador at Berlin. (LN). Agénor de Gramont, 10th Duke of Gramont (Antoine Alfred Agénor; 14 August 1819 – 17 January 1880) was a French diplomat and statesman who also had the title Prince of Bidache.

> remember that his influence in the Government is the principal security we can have for *Free Trade and cordiality between the two countries.*
>
> What the Emperor will really do depends on the course of events. I believe nothing of the stories of his having deep-laid schemes. It is a pity that he has not stronger men in the Cabinet—men strong enough to resist him in case of need—and to direct the Chamber. A dissolution is hardly to be thought of at present.

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> The people at large would not stand being disturbed to vote again soon, and consequently the votes would be few, and principally Republican. There is danger in the influence of the Emperor's old political friends, who want to regain their old position, and in some of the influential military men who want a war for promotion and glory. And there is danger in the position in which the Plébiscite has placed him—owing mainly to the Republicans, who, much more than he is, are to blame for making it a question between him personally and them. The function of the 21st went off very well; indeed, wonderfully well, considering how great a part of the audience was composed of Senators and Councillors of State who have lost in importance by the Constitutional change.

The excitement attending the plébiscite gave way before long to a feeling of political lassitude, and to those surmises concerning the probabilities of weathering the session which habitually preoccupy Constitutional Governments. It is of more interest to turn for a moment to a matter which is now fortunately viewed in a very different light.

Having been asked his advice on some question concerning Canada, Lord Lyons wrote to Lord Clarendon the following as his deliberate opinion, and it must be borne in mind that he had had exceptional opportunities of studying the Canadian situation:—

> I never feel comfortable about Canada and our North American possessions. I do not believe we have the means of defending them against the United States in case of war, and I am by no means confident that the colonists would be unanimous and enthusiastic in helping us to do so. I am afraid too that the colonists are beginning to see that in matters short of war, we feel that we must let the United States do very much as they please: in short that we doubt our having the strength to resist them,

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> and, unless under a very strong provocation, have not the spirit to try. I was struck by an observation made some time ago by the Governor of Newfoundland respecting the French claims and the coast fisheries, *viz*. that the Colonists felt that if the United States were their masters, the questions would soon be settled in their favour. In fact it seems to be in the nature of things that the United States' prestige should grow and ours should wane in North America, and I wish we were well and creditably out of the scrape.

In the course of the previous year he had already expressed the opinion that the great problem for us in American politics was to find some fair and honourable way of dissolving all connection between England and our North American colonies.

Lord Clarendon on his side was equally emphatic. "I agree," he wrote on June 1, "in every word you say about our possessions in North America, and wish that they would propose to be independent, and to annex themselves. We cant throw them off, and it is very desirable that we should part as friends."

The views of Lord Stanley on this subject have already been quoted, and, if search were made, no doubt it would be discovered that similar sentiments were entertained by nearly all the mid-Victorian statesmen. I have a clear recollection of hearing, less than thirty years ago, a Cabinet Minister, who had been Colonial Secretary, express the opinion that "colonies were expensive luxuries which only a rich country like England could afford to indulge in."

One of the last letters written by Lord Clarendon refers to suspicions created by the visit to Ems[246] of the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and Bismarck.

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Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, June 8, 1870.

> I have nothing of importance to write about.
>
> Loftus says that the Berlin public is much *intrigué* by the sudden departure of the King and Bismarck for Ems, as the Czar was at Berlin ten days before, when Bismarck pretended to be too ill to come and meet him.
>
> Bernstorff professes entire ignorance on the subject, and supposes that, as Ems is now Prussian, the King thinks it necessary to give a personal welcome to his Imperial relative.
>
> This is possible, but not probable, and I suspect, though I can give no good reason for so doing, that the more complete unification of Germany occupies the Prussian mind, beginning of course by the incorporation of Baden, and that it is thought desirable to get a Russian sanction of the project, in the event of its leading to war with France. One fails, however, to discover any reason why Russia should make an enemy of France and endanger the peace of Europe in order to justify the ambition of Prussia and enable the King to unduly tax his subjects for an unnecessary army.

Lord Clarendon's suspicions in this case were as correct as his prophecy with regard to the establishment of a Republic in France, although the words "unnecessary army" might be taken exception to in the light of subsequent events. Benedetti[247] happened to be in Paris at the time when Lord Clarendon's letter arrived, and he informed Lord Lyons that he had "entire confidence in the assurances of the King of Prussia and Bismarck, and that he did not apprehend any danger to peace, unless circumstances were too strong for His Majesty and his Minister, and this he

[246] Bad Ems is a town in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. It is the administrative seat of the Rhein-Lahn rural district and is well known as a spa on the river Lahn.
[247] French Ambassador at Berlin. (LN)

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thought improbable." The idea of circumstances being too strong for Bismarck might fairly be classed with the danger to Prussia threatened by the appointment of Monsignor Klazko.

Lord Clarendon died on June 27, and was succeeded at the Foreign Office on July 6 by Lord Granville.[248] The celebrated announcement that there had never been so great a lull in foreign affairs was made upon the authority of Mr. Hammond,[249] whose singularly faulty judgment and unhappy prophecies have been already commented upon. At the same time, it must in justice be admitted that appearances in the early summer of 1870 were unusually deceptive owing to the general calm which prevailed in the diplomatic world.

When the Hohenzollern[250] candidature thunderbolt fell in the early days of July, the Duc de Gramont lost no time in intimating to the British Ambassador that France would go to war with both Spain and Prussia rather than allow a Hohenzollern to reign at Madrid. But although Gramont seemed bent upon committing the French Government to this course, he allowed it to be seen that he would be very grateful for any exertion England might make to induce the King of Prussia to forbid his kinsman to go on with his candidature. The election of Montpensier,[251] he said, might be looked upon as a *mauvais procédé*[252] towards the Emperor and the dynasty, but the putting forward a Prussian was an insult and an injury to all France. Similar language was held by the French Ambassador in London.

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[248] Granville George Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Granville (11 May 1815 – 31 March 1891), styled Lord Leveson until 1846, was a British Liberal statesman and diplomat from the Leveson-Gower family. He is best remembered for his service as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His foreign policy kept Britain free from European wars and improved relations with the United States after the strain during the American Civil War. His father was a younger son of Granville Leveson-Gower, 1st Marquess of Stafford and his third wife. His half brother, son of the second wife became the 2nd Marquess of Stafford, and his marriage with the daughter and heiress of the 18th Earl of Sutherland (Countess of Sutherland in her own right) led to the merging of the Gower and Stafford titles in that of the Dukes of Sutherland (created 1833). They were the richest family in Britain at that time.

[249] *The Life of Lord Granville* (LN)

[250] The House of Hohenzollern is a formerly royal (and from 1871 to 1918, imperial) German dynasty whose members were variously princes, electors, kings and emperors of Hohenzollern, Brandenburg, Prussia, the German Empire, and Romania. Leopold, Prince of Hohenzollern (German: Leopold Stephan Karl Anton Gustav Eduard Tassilo Fürst von Hohenzollern; 22 September 1835 – 8 June 1905) was the head of the Swabian branch of the House of Hohenzollern, and played a fleeting role in European power politics in connection with the Franco-Prussian War.

[251] Antoine, Duke of Montpensier (Antoine Marie Philippe Louis d'Orléans; 31 July 1824 – 4 February 1890[1]), was a member of the French royal family in the House of Orléans. He was the youngest son of King Louis Philippe of France and his wife Maria Amelia Teresa of the Two Sicilies. On 16 November 1870 the Cortes voted for the next king and chose Amadeo of Savoy with 191 votes. Antoine only received 27 votes, and left Spain, only to return in 1874.

[252] Incorrect process, the wrong way to proceed.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, July 6, 1870.

Your telegram of yesterday arrived while we were debating the Land Bill. It took Mr. Gladstone and

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me by surprise. I received your despatch and private letter this morning, and on my return from Windsor, M. de La Valette called on me. He held the same language to me as that reported by you to have been held by Gramont. France disclaimed all interference with Spain, but stated the arguments which made the possession of the Crown of Spain by a Prussian Prince dangerous to France. I am writing to catch the post, and I cannot repeat to you all the reasons which he gave, concluding by assuring me that the circumstances were of the gravest character, and that in his opinion, the Government of the Emperor could not, under the pressure of public opinion, admit a project of such a nature. He added however that there was no reason why any preliminary means should not be tried to avert so great an evil, and he addressed himself to the Government of the Queen, on the strength of our friendly relations, and our desire to maintain the peace of Europe, to exercise all our influence upon Prussia and upon Spain to stop the project.

I told M. de La Valette of the surprise which the matter had been to H.M. Government, that I perfectly understood the unfavourable effect which such an announcement was contemplated to produce in France, although I did not agree with all the arguments which he had used with respect to the importance to so great a nation as France of a German prince on the throne of Spain.

I said it was a matter of some regret to me that such strong language as that reported by you to have been addressed to the Prussian Ambassador should have been used. But I added that it was not so much a moment for the general discussion, as to see what could be done.

I readily assented to his request to use what influence we might possess both with Prussia and Spain, but without any pretension to dictate to either Power, to induce them to take into the most serious consideration all the bearings of this question, such as its gravity required, and I promised to communicate with you, Lord A. Loftus, and Mr. Layard[253] at once.

It is very sad that I should be writing to you in the place of one who would have had so much personal power in such a matter as this.

[253] Sir Austen Henry Layard GCB PC (5 March 1817 – 5 July 1894) was an English Assyriologist, traveller, cuneiformist, art historian, draughtsman, collector, politician and diplomat. He is best known as the excavator of Nimrud and of Nineveh. He had a political career between 1852, when he was elected as a Member of Parliament, and 1869, holding various junior ministerial positions. He was then made ambassador to Madrid, then Constantinople.

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In the meanwhile, however, the explosion of Chauvinism in France and the attitude of the French Ministers rendered the situation more alarming from day to day. Undoubtedly the French Government desired and hoped to carry their point without actual war, but Ministers had burnt their ships and left themselves no means of escape if they failed in their attempt to win a moral victory over Prussia. As Gramont remarked, "*l'Avènement du Prince de Hohenzollern, c'est la guerre!*"[254] It was almost impossible to see what injury to French interests could be caused by the presence of a Hohenzollern at Madrid, but the question had been taken up as a point of honour, and was therefore more dangerous than if treated from a material point of view. The Emperor, according to Lord Lyons, remained at this stage of the crisis, very calm and extremely confident that he would get his way without war. There was no doubt that he was strongly averse from war, partly on account of his own views, and partly on the ground of his ill-health, which would be a serious drawback if he were forced to take the command of the army; but he also felt that it would not be safe for him to submit to another rebuff from Prussia, and his Constitutional Ministers were inconveniently anxious to show their spirit.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Paris, July 10, 1870.

> The state of things to-day may be told in half a dozen words. If the Prince of Hohenzollern's renunciation is announced in 24 or 48 hours, there will be peace *for the moment*. If not, there will be an immediate declaration of war against Prussia. I cannot however answer for even this situation

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> lasting for the 48 hours. The French are getting more and more excited. They think they have got the start of Prussia this time in forwardness of preparation; that they have a better cause of war, as being one less likely to rouse the Germans, than they are likely to get again; and in fact that they must have it out with Prussia sooner or later; and that they had better not throw away this chance. When I say that I cannot answer for things remaining in as favourable a situation as they are now, for 48 hours, I mean that if the excitement goes on, the French may choose to pick a quarrel on the form of the renunciation, or some other pretext, even if the Prince retires.
>
> End how it will, the whole affair is a terrible misfortune, for the French and the Prussians will hate each other more than ever, and I hardly expect to see their animosity come back to the quiescent state in which it was a month ago.
>
> Gramont says that, so far from the energetic language and preparations of France thwarting your endeavours to preserve peace, they afford the only chance of your succeeding.
>
> I told him I did not at all agree with him.

[254] The Accession of the Prince of Hohenzollern means war.

This letter reveals two colossal errors on the part of the French. They honestly thought that they were better prepared for war than the Prussians, and they believed that the latter could be successfully intimidated.

As late as July 12 Lord Granville still believed that Prussia did not really want war, and hoped that the pressure applied to the Hohenzollern Prince by Queen Victoria and other important personages would avert the calamity. Writing on the same day, Lord Lyons said that he did not despair of peace, but that the war feeling was very strong, both in and out of the Ministry.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, July 13, 1870.

Nothing can be better than your work at Paris, and I only wish it may prove successful.

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My colleagues and the House of Commons are getting very angry, and Gladstone wishes me to use stronger language to the French Government than would, in my opinion, be useful for the object, although it is true that no nation is powerful enough in these times to stand up against the public opinion of Europe.

Your telegram of this evening leaves some hope, but I very much doubt whether, even if we are asked by France, we can exert any more pressure on Prussia, who in substance has done all that we were told to ask and all that Gramont said was necessary to put an end to the dispute.

La Valette is very angry. He gets a communication from his Foreign Office once in three days, and then there is hardly anything in it. His argument to-day is probably not the one his Government uses. I do not, like everybody else, suspect the French of having had a project of going to war. But having got into the wrangle, having found their warlike preparations so popular, and having roused effectually the feelings of France and Prussia, they do not like to abstain from a fight, which they think will come, and in which during the next six weeks their enemies would be unprepared.

I have some thoughts of asking the Cabinet, if war is declared, whether it would be wise to ask both Governments whether they are prepared to respect the neutrality of Belgium. It is always safer, or at least, generally so, to do nothing; but both, in doubt, would be more likely to give a favourable answer, than either flushed with victory. Let me know what you think, and please make any other suggestions which may occur to you if the emergency arises.

As far as I can judge, all the Neutral Powers are sincerely anxious for peace. Italy, certainly so. The only thing which we have done, of which I doubt, is having asked Italy a leading question about an Italian Prince. They seem to wish to entangle us further in the matter. It was of great importance before Spain and France were reconciled, but now I presume it will be discreet to let this matter remain in the hands of the parties concerned.

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The phrase "in which during the next six weeks their enemies would be unprepared," seems to imply that H.M. Government were singularly ill-informed as to the true state of Prussian military efficiency.

Upon July 14, Lord Lyons reported that an article in the *North German Gazette* seemed to make war absolutely inevitable, and that Benedetti, who was expected in Paris the following day, confirmed the accuracy of the newspaper. Werther,[255] too, the Prussian Ambassador, had announced to Gramont that "he had been granted leave of absence and was about to take advantage of it immediately." Even the guileless Hammond was alarmed. "Why Bismarck went to Berlin instead of Ems, and finally retired to Varzin[256] without personal communications with his master, is not easy to explain, and with a person of his character the proceeding is somewhat suspicious." The last hope of peace practically vanished when Bismarck intimated that he could not recommend to the King for acceptance the proposal made by H.M. Government.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 16, 1870.

> It will be a miracle if we are as good friends with France six months after the beginning of this wretched war, as we are now, and it will require the utmost tact, prudence and consideration for French susceptibilities to prevent all the improvement in feeling between the two nations, which has grown up in the last twenty years, being entirely destroyed.
>
> We have already a question with Gramont about his assertion that we recognized the justice of his complaint. I hope it may be possible to let this drop, but if not it is to be noted that, my memorandum correcting the assertion on your authority was in his hands the night before he repeated the assertion in his declaration of yesterday.

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> In referring to his declaration that if the Hohenzollern renunciation were obtained, France would be satisfied, it may be well to bear in mind that the exact words he used to me were: "*If the Prince of Hohenzollern should now, on the advice of the King of Prussia,* withdraw his acceptance of the Crown the whole affair would be at an end."
>
> This point becomes of less importance as France now seems to set the Hohenzollern affair aside altogether, and to rest her *casus belli* wholly on the boast of the affront to Benedetti.
>
> Above all things we must try and keep as much as possible out of Blue Books. If it is absolutely necessary to have one now, pray let me have the opportunity of looking over anything of mine which it is proposed to publish, and suggesting omissions. It would also

[255] Baron Karl Anton Philipp von Werther (31 January 1809 – 8 February 1894) was a German diplomat. A royal Prussian Privy Councilor and Envoy, later to the North German Confederation and the German Empire, serving in Switzerland, Greece, Denmark, Russia, Austria, France and the Ottoman Empire.
[256] Bismarck had an estate at Varzin, Pomerania (now Warcino, Poland) which was expropriated in 1945 as a result of border changes promulgated at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 and the subsequent expulsion of the Germans from German provinces annexed by Poland.

be a great relief to me to be allowed to consult Gramont himself, as I did La Valette on the Cretan Blue Book. The cases are not the same, and I might not use the power, but I should like to have it. I am the more alarmed with regard to Gramont, as his reputation for inaccuracy is so universal, that there must be some foundation for it.

Newspaper correspondents, amateur travellers, and so forth, are already tormenting me to get them leave to accompany the French Army. I believe none are to be allowed; but if it be otherwise, I think the danger of being held responsible for their indiscretions would be so great and so damaging to our relations with France, that I do not think I should be justified in applying for leave on any private recommendation, however strong: in fact, I should not be willing to apply on anything short of a distinct official order, in each case from you; and such an order I should be sorry to receive.

I tremble at the thought of the Blockades. Those during the American Civil War kept us in perpetual hot water and within an inch of war with the United States, and the labours of working out the cases without coming to a rupture was very nearly the death of me. Heaven defend us from anything like an *Alabama* case with the French!

It is important that I should know as soon as possible whether our Embassy at Berlin might

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take charge of French subjects in Prussia. I am pretty sure to be sounded very soon, and might perhaps be able to soften the very bad impression a refusal would make, by preventing the request being made. I should wish us to accept, and I don't see why, as impartial neutrals, we might not take charge also of the Prussians in Paris, if we were asked, though I would rather avoid this if possible.

Just at this moment the *Liberté* caused some embarrassment by publishing more or less correct details respecting the secret negotiations which had taken place earlier in the year between Lord Clarendon and Bismarck on the question of disarmament. Lord Granville had not been in the confidence of Lord Clarendon, and it now was necessary to explain to him what had passed. How the *Liberté* obtained its information does not appear. Daru always stoutly maintained that he had not mentioned the matter to any one except the Emperor and Ollivier, and the disclosures involved not only a gross breach of confidence on the part of some one—presumably a French Foreign Office official—but also a danger that Bismarck might demand explanations. The tremendous events, however, of the next few weeks, diverted attention from the *Liberté's* revelations. War was formally declared on July 19.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 19, 1870.

The war has been forced upon the Emperor principally by his own party in the Chamber, the Right, and by his Ministers. Constitutional Government has so far established itself that a Ministry in a minority in the *Corps Législatif* is as much bound to go out as a Ministry in the House of Commons.

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> The Emperor was in a bad position to resist, because after the line taken at the time of Sadowa,[257] it would have been too dangerous for him to be put forward as the cause of France's truckling to Prussia. The whole affair is a series of blunders which has culminated in an awful catastrophe.
>
> Gramont told me this afternoon that La Valette wrote him a very *bizarre* story. La Valette said that it had been considered by the British Cabinet whether they should not send an English force to occupy Belgium during the war, which would be a strange way of showing respect for Belgian neutrality.
> I should myself be very sorry to see a British soldier landed on the Continent, and seriously alarmed if any force that was landed was under a hundred thousand strong.
>
> Gramont told me also that Bray[258] had hit upon a combination to which France would have no objection if it were possible. Bray declared that Bavaria would be neutral if the neutrality of Baden were secured. Gramont said however that of course to carry out such an arrangement, the Prussian troops must retire from Rastadt.[259]
>
> He said he had just been informed that Italy had called out two classes of her military contingent. He did not know what this might mean. Italy has not yet made to France any declaration of policy.
>
> Gramont concluded by saying that he supposed all the Minor States would wait for a battle and then declare for the victor.

The neutrality of Belgium was, of course, one of the main preoccupations of H.M. Government, but there is no reason to suppose that a British occupation was ever seriously contemplated, and La Valette's report on the subject was probably caused by the vanity of appearing to possess special pieces of information which often leads diplomatists astray. Belgium was not, however, the only country which had reason to feel alarmed. The position of

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Denmark before hostilities actually began between France and Prussia was both painful and critical. The Danish Minister at Paris appeared at the British Embassy in great distress, saying that he knew nothing of what his Government intended, and asking for information; as it seemed quite likely that the Danish capital would be occupied by whichever of the two opposing armies could

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[257] The Battle of Königgrätz (or Sadowa) was the decisive battle of the Austro-Prussian War in which the Kingdom of Prussia defeated the Austrian Empire. It took place on 3 July 1866, near the Bohemian city of Hradec Králové (German: Königgrätz) and village of Sadová, now in the Czech Republic.

[258] The Bavarian Minister. (LN). Otto Kamillus Hugo Gabriel Count von Bray-Steinburg (17 May 1807 – 9 January 1899) was a Bavarian diplomat and politician. Bray led the Bavarian delegation for the negotiations of the Bavarian accession to the German Empire and managed to secure a privileged status for the Kingdom of Bavaria within the empire (Reservatrechte). The Kingdom of Bavaria was able to retain its own railways, postal service, diplomatic body and even its own army, which would fall under Prussian command only during times of war.

[259] Rastatt is a town in the District of Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

get there first. It was common knowledge that a great expedition was fitting out for Copenhagen at Cherbourg, and that General Trochu,[260] who passed for about the best French general, was to command it. And if French forces appeared off Copenhagen it would be impossible to restrain the people from marching against the Prussians, although there was, as yet apparently, no understanding between the French and Danish Governments.

On July 25 the *Times* surprised the world by publishing the text of a draft treaty concerning the annexation of Belgium which it was alleged had been submitted by the French Government to Bismarck in 1866.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Paris, July 26, 1870.

> I have had some conversation with Gramont about the nefarious *Projet de Traité* which the *Times* has given to the world, but as he has written to La Valette about it, I had better leave you to receive from him the French version. The only curious, and to me quite new statement which he made, was that Bismarck had at one time offered, if France was afraid of the odium of occupying Belgium, to occupy it first himself, and then to retire in apparent deference to remonstrances from France, and so give France a pretext for entering.
>
> It has long been a common belief among diplomatists that France and Prussia have at

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> different times discussed the propriety of seizing, the one upon Belgium, the other upon Holland. No such scandalous iniquity has been contemplated since the partition of Poland, and it is much worse than the partition of Poland, for there might be some colourable assertions that Poland was turbulent, ill-governed, that most of the population were serfs, and that she was an inconvenient neighbour. But Belgium and Holland are free, extremely well governed, and, to say the least, perfectly inoffensive neighbours. One must leave it to the parties concerned to defend themselves from the reproach of such odious projects, and I hope they will.
>
> The insinuation in the leading article in the *Times* that the subject has been revived by France since the Hohenzollern crisis seems to me to be extremely improbable.
>
> Bernstorff's attempts to make you vouch for the authenticity of the *Projet*, without committing himself, is as poor a little trick as I ever heard of.
>
> I send you in a despatch the official account of the cause of the tardiness in producing Benedetti's despatch, that is to say, delicacy on the part of Gramont. The version accepted by the public is that the whole affair had been forgotten at the Ministère until at last Benedetti himself remembered it and had it looked up.

[260] Louis-Jules Trochu (12 March 1815 – 7 October 1896) was a French military leader and politician. He served as President of the Government of National Defence—France's *de facto* head of state—from 4 September 1870 until his resignation on 22 January 1871

With the object of prejudicing European opinion against Prussia, the Emperor wrote the well-known letter to Gramont from Metz, on July 28, accusing Bismarck of having proposed to France the annexation of Belgium, but the sole result was that both parties were shown to have played an equally sordid part in the transaction, and they were consequently both induced to agree to the English proposal that they should give a new and formal pledge not to violate Belgian integrity.

In a letter dated July 31, is a dispassionate analysis of the inadequate causes which had brought about a rupture at that particular moment.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 31, 1870.

> I see the public, with their usual tendency to attribute everything to deep-laid plots and schemes, generally suppose that war was a foregone conclusion on the part of France and of Prussia. I don't believe it in the case of Prussia, and I know it not to be the fact as regards France. Prussia threw the first stone, by bringing on the Hohenzollern question. France made a peaceful settlement difficult by Gramont's irritating declaration on the 6th. The cause of the change from a mild to an irritating declaration was the arrival of the report from the *Chargé d'Affaires* at Berlin, that Thile[261] pooh-poohed the French remonstrance, and said that the question *n'existait pas pour le Gouvernement Prussien*.[262] Then came the great fault of France in not accepting the renunciation of the Hohenzollern as a final settlement; but, even at the last moment the declaration of the 16th would have concluded with a phrase leaving the door open to the mediation of a Congress, if the article in the *North German Gazette* had not arrived, and convinced the French that Bismarck had decided upon war. However, it is no use crying over spilt milk.
>
> I understand that the Emperor writes to the Empress that no great action is to be expected for three or four days. At the French Head Quarters there was an apprehension that the Prussians might attempt to turn the right flank of the French Army.

Subsequent revelations have shown how profoundly the course of events was influenced by the action of Bismarck in connection with the tone of the German press, and by his distortion of the celebrated Ems interview between the King of Prussia and Benedetti, but this was of course unknown at the time.

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One humorous incident in connection with the outbreak of hostilities is worth recording. Animated by what Lord Clarendon would have called the spirit of flunkeyism, the Paris diplomatists grew greatly excited over the question of illuminations in the event of French victories. As was only to be expected, the accommodating Austrian Ambassador was foremost in advocating rejoicings, and

[261] Prussian Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (LN). Karl Hermann von Thile (19 December 1812 – 26 December 1889) was a German diplomat, and the first Foreign Secretary of Germany and head of the Foreign Office (21 March 1871 – 30 September 1872). In 1862 he became Under-Secretary of State in the Prussian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[262] Does not exist for the Prussian Government.

he and his Italian colleague were bent upon illuminating their Embassies, while the representatives of the smaller Powers, such as Switzerland, who lived in less conspicuous abodes, opposed the proposal, and were supported by the British Ambassador. The question was referred home, and the Foreign Office took the common-sense view that the Ambassador should not illuminate without necessity, but should do so rather than cause trouble or give offence.

The early reverses of the campaign were concealed from the public with some success, MacMahon's[263] defeat being known at the Embassy twelve hours before the official announcement; but as soon as the truth came out, the population of the capital seems to have believed that the Germans would at once appear before Paris.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Paris, Aug. 8, 1870.

> If the panic in the army is as great as it is in the capital, it is all over with France. One would think that the Prussians were already in Montmartre. There must, it is supposed, be a great battle fought before they can get there, and the French may win it.
>
> I have been beset with Representatives of small Powers, all except the Belgian, in consternation,

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> and with Rothschilds and other bankers in despair. They hope England will interfere to stop the Prussian army on its road to Paris: not an easy task if the road is open.
>
> All Gramont could or would tell me was that the Emperor was concentrating forces between Metz and Chalons, and that a great battle was expected.
>
> I was really ashamed to speak to him about our Treaty, but I thrust your despatch on him, knowing you were anxious to avoid delay. He said: *n'ayez pas peur, nous n'avons pas grande envie d'entrer en Belgique dans ce moment.*[264]

In the Chamber, no one, even on the Right, had the generosity to say a single word in defence of the unfortunate Emperor when a declaration was made from the Tribune that all the disasters were due to the inefficiency of the Commander-in-Chief. Ollivier and his colleagues resigned, and General Trochu, who had been given an unimportant command in the South, was hailed as the possible saviour of the country, and offered, in vain, the War Office in the new administration of

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[263] Marie Edme Patrice Maurice de MacMahon, marquis de MacMahon, duc de Magenta (13 June 1808 – 17 October 1893), was a French general and politician who served as President of France from 1873 to 1879. He was elevated to the dignity of Marshal of France by Napoleon III. He led the main French army in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. He was trapped and wounded at the Battle of Sedan in September 1870, in part because of his confused and indecisive strategic planning. The army, including MacMahon and Emperor Napoleon III, surrendered to the Germans. Thus the Emperor was deposed and the French Third Republic was proclaimed. After convalescing, MacMahon was appointed head of the Versailles army, which suppressed the Paris Commune revolt in May 1871 and set the stage for his political career.

[264] Have no fear, we have no great desire to enter Belgium at the moment.

Count Palikao.[265] It is instructive to note that Gramont (upon whom Bismarck subsequently heaped the most savage contempt) denied to Lord Lyons that he had ever been in favour of war. According to him, the strongest phrase in the declaration of July 6 was inserted at the Council on that morning, and was not in his draft, and he threw the blame of the imprudent haste in going to war on Leboeuf's[266] confident declaration that neither France nor any other country had ever been so well prepared for war before. Leboeuf's celebrated declaration about gaiter buttons has always been cited as almost unequalled for fatuity, but it is an undoubted fact that Gramont himself was convinced that a Franco-Prussian war was inevitable, and he is not known to have discouraged the idea.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Aug. 16, 1870.

> So far as we can conjecture, the military situation is very bad, and the political is certainly as bad as can be. There are ups and downs in the spirits of the French about the war, but the Emperor and the dynasty seem simply to sink lower and lower. La Tour d'Auvergne speaks still as a loyal subject, but I know of no one else who does. The Empress shows pluck, but not hope. She has sent her nieces away, and she summoned the Bonapartes in Paris to the Tuileries yesterday, and told them plainly that the time was come for them to look after themselves.
>
> No party wishes to come into office, with the risk of having to sign a disadvantageous peace. It is this which has hitherto kept the Left within bounds. They wish the peace to be made by the Emperor before they upset him. No one can tell what the effect of a victory might be; few people expect one, and fewer still believe that the effect would be to set the Emperor on his legs again. The Paris population so far seems to have behaved well.

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[265] Charles Guillaume Marie Appollinaire Antoine Cousin-Montauban, 1er Comte de Palikao (24 June 1796 – 8 January 1878) was a French general and statesman. In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 he was not given a command in the field, but after the opening disasters had shaken the Ollivier ministry he was entrusted by the empress-regent with the portfolio of war, and became president of the council (10 August). He at once, with great success, reorganized the military resources of the nation. He claimed to have raised Marshal MacMahon's force at Châlons to 140,000 men, to have created three new army corps, 33 new regiments and 100,000 *gardes mobiles*, and to have brought the defences of the capital to a state of efficiency – all this in 24 days. He conceived the idea of sending the Army of Châlons to raise the blockade of Metz. The scheme depended on a precision and rapidity of which the Army of Châlons was no longer capable, and ended with the disaster of Sedan. After the capitulation of the emperor the dictatorship was offered to Palikao, but he refused to desert the empire, and proposed to establish a council of national defence, with himself as lieutenant-general of government. Before a decision was made, the chamber was invaded by the mob, and Palikao fled to Belgium.[1]

[266] Edmond Leboeuf (5 December 1809 – 7 June 1888) was a marshal of France. On the declaration of war with Prussia, Marshal Leboeuf delivered himself in the *Corps Législatif* of the historic saying, 'So ready are we, that if the war lasts two years, not a gaiter button would be found wanting'. It may be that he intended this to mean that, given time, the reorganization of the War Office would be perfected through experience,

The one thing, in fact, upon which there seemed to be general agreement was that the Empire was doomed.

By the middle of August the feeling in Paris against England, produced largely by articles in the London press, had reached a very disagreeable point, and the Ambassador was obliged to ask that he might be spared from having to make too many obnoxious communications to the French Government; these communications consisting of complaints put forward by the Prussian Government through the channel of the British Embassy at Paris, which it was really the duty of the United States Legation to deal with.

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Lord Lyons to Mr. Hammond.
Paris, Aug. 23, 1870.

> The last paragraph of your letter of this morning frightens me not a little. You say the Prussians complain of a flag of truce being fired upon and of field hospitals being shot at; and you add: "You will probably hear from us about these matters, if Bernstorff makes a formal representation." I hope this does not imply that you mean to adopt all Prussian complaints as British, and make me the channel of communicating them to the French Government. Please do not forget that the United States Legation, not this Embassy, represents Prussian interests in France, and that if you impose upon me such works of supererogation as making unpleasant communications from Prussia, you will expose me to well-merited snubs, and damage my position so much that I shall be able to effect very little in a real emergency. The particular things which you mention ought not to be made the subject of diplomatic representation at all: they ought to be discussed by Flag of Truce between the two Generals.

Why H.M. Government should have taken the inexplicable course of gratuitously offending the French Government is not explained, but at all events the practice was abandoned.

When, towards the end of August, it was announced that the Crown Prince was advancing upon Paris, the Empress, the members of the Government, and the Chambers, proclaimed their determination to stay in the town. The Empress probably feared that if she once left, she might never return; but the decision to attempt to govern a country from a besieged town was so obviously unpractical that it can hardly have been taken seriously, for it was

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plain that each party in turn would discover that it was essential to be in communication with the outside world. The Empress herself seems to have preserved her fortitude during this unhappy period. "I saw the Empress yesterday," wrote Lord Lyons, on September 1, "for the first time since the war. She was calm and natural, well aware, I think, of the real state of things, but courageous without boasting or affectation. She let me know by La Tour d'Auvergne that she would like to see me. She did not invite, nor did I offer any advice or any assurances or conjectures as to what England or any other Power was likely to do."

Within three or four days of this interview the Empress herself was a fugitive, the Empire had collapsed without a hand being raised to defend it, and the mob, breaking into the Chamber, had called the Third Republic into existence. The delight of changing one form of government was so great that the French almost forgot for the moment that the enemy was practically at the gates of Paris, but M. Jules Favre, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new Provisional Government, lost no time in communicating with Lord Lyons and sounding him with regard to mediation.

According to Jules Favre, the new Government had two courses of action in view. The first was to proclaim loudly that France would fight to the death rather than make any undue concessions to Prussia. This was the course intended for public consumption. The second and practical course was to accept cordially the intervention of Foreign Powers with the object of restricting French sacrifices within endurable limits. In other words, he thought that France ought to submit to paying the expenses of the war, provided her territorial integrity remained

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intact. As for agreeing to a cession of territory, no man in France would venture even to speak of such a thing, and the Government and the people were equally determined to perish rather than give way upon it. The public, and in particular, the inhabitants of Paris were greatly averse from any pecuniary sacrifice, but he (obviously considering himself to be an exceptionally far-seeing statesman) felt so strongly that a pecuniary sacrifice was necessary, that unless the principle was acceded to, he should feel bound to leave the Government. If, therefore, foreign Governments would offer mediation upon the basis of keeping French territory intact, their intervention would be extremely useful and ought to be admitted gratefully by France. If, however, Foreign Powers could only mediate on the basis of a cession of territory, their interference would be ineffectual and offensive, rather than agreeable to France.

It is rather surprising, in view of this artless opinion, to learn that Jules Favre seemed to be pretty well acquainted with the feeling in Germany; and, at all events, he realized that the one neutral Power who was likely to influence Prussia was Russia. It is also rather surprising to learn that he considered the immediate proclamation of a Republic to be a mistake, due to the impetuosity of the Paris population, and calculated to alienate the French provinces as well as foreign Governments, and he was forced to admit that the new Government was completely under the control of the mob.

On September 6, a surreptitious interview took place between Lord Lyons and M. Thiers, who was not a member of the Government of National Defence.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Sept, 6, 1870.

> I have had conversations to-day, both with Thiers and with Jules Favre. They think they can bring public opinion to accept a peace with a large pecuniary indemnity to Prussia, but they are afraid of being thought by the populace to be begging the aid of England at this

moment: so much so, that Thiers was afraid either of coming here or of my going to his house, and asked me to meet him at Alphonse de Rothschild's.[267]

I put to him the extreme difficulty of inducing Prussia to accept mediation without securing some cession of territory, and asked him whether he would still be in favour of its being offered, even if Prussia were almost certain to reject it. He considered the Pros and Cons. On the one hand, he saw danger to France and to Europe, if the neutral Powers should look quietly on, while France was being destroyed, without any sort of mark of feeling, or of protest against her dismemberment. On the other hand, he did not conceal from himself that it might lower the authority of the other Powers, and in some sort put a seal upon the predominance of Prussia, if they spoke in vain and took no steps to give effect to their language. After some consideration, however, he said he inclined to the opinion that the offer should at all events be made.

I told Jules Favre that Thiers had hesitated about this. He answered at once: "I do not hesitate for a moment. I decidedly wish the mediation, on the basis of the integrity of our territory, to be made, whether Prussia accepts it or not."

Jules Favre was very decided about the armistice. He thought France could not herself ask for one, in her present position, but it was plain enough (which is certainly not at all surprising) that he would be very grateful to any neutral Power who would try to bring one about.

Time presses, for the Prussians may be said to be almost literally at the gates.

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Thiers pointed out with all his clearness and eloquence the danger to the different nations of Europe, of the predominance of Prussia, and dwelt also a good deal upon the risk of a Red Republic, with a foreign propaganda, etc., etc., if the present Government were overthrown in consequence of further military reverses, or of a disgraceful peace. He pointed out that, with the exception of Rochefort, all the Provisional Government were Moderate Republicans and honest men. Rochefort was, he said, very manageable and less dangerous in the Government than out of it. He was in hopes order would be maintained, but he did not shut his eyes to the fact that the Government was without the means of resisting the mob of Paris, if the mob should become excited or enraged by defeats.

There seems to me to be a great deal of depression in Paris. People seem to feel that an obstinate defence of the town might only lead to its destruction and leave France more at

[267] Mayer Alphonse James Rothschild (1 February 1827 – 26 May 1905), was a French financier, vineyard owner, art collector, philanthropist, racehorse owner/breeder and a member of the Rothschild banking family of France. During the Franco-Prussian War, Alphonse de Rothschild had guarded the ramparts of Paris on the eve of the Prussian siege. When a peace treaty was finally agreed in January 1871, his bank would play a major role, not only in raising the five billion francs France was obliged to pay in reparations to the new German Empire, but in helping bring about economic stability. France made a dramatic financial recovery and repaid the reparations bill ahead of schedule which, under terms of the armistice, brought about an end to the German occupation of northern French territory in 1873.

> the mercy of Prussia than ever. They have also a great dread, that while the respectable citizens are on the ramparts, the Reds may pillage the town.
>
> How all this may turn out, I do not pretend to guess. The first days of a Revolution are generally those on which the mob behaves the best. Hitherto everybody has behaved extremely well, and only a few people have suffered from the unfortunate epidemic which prevails and makes every one who cannot speak French well be taken for a Prussian spy.
>
> Jules Favre has not yet announced his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, nor, I think, seen any of the Foreign Diplomatists except me. The circular which he has prepared for Foreign Powers is very fierce in its language, but it mentions peace, and even pronounces the word "*traiter*" and he seems to consider it rather a bold step towards accustoming the people of Paris to the idea of treating while the Prussians are still on French soil.

Lord Granville, as his letters show, was at first by no means anxious to mediate, but altered his mind, because he

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was under the impression that the change of government in Paris had made the Prussians more anxious to treat. The French were not to be informed of this altered attitude on the part of their adversary but were to be encouraged to put forward "elastic" proposals, Bismarck having graciously intimated that he had no objection to England becoming the channel of communication. The objections to mediation were sufficiently obvious. If the basis of a cession of territory were to be adopted, then it would be clearly undesirable for any neutral country to attempt to exercise any pressure upon France, and there would not be anything to be gained by such action, for France could always obtain peace on these terms from Prussia without foreign aid. If, on the other hand, mediation was adopted on the basis of the integrity of French territory, there appeared to be little or no chance of success.

In spite of the unpromising prospects various attempts were made to sound the views of the Prussian Government with regard to an eventual peace on the basis of integrity of territory. The Russians were requested by the French to make known the terms on which the latter were prepared to treat. Communications at Berlin were made by the Italian Government, and the meddling Beust caused it to be announced to the Prussian Government that France would accept an armistice on the condition of territorial integrity. As he was a *persona ingratissima*[268] to Bismarck, his efforts were not likely to meet with much success, and it was intimated to him and to the others that Bismarck reserved to himself all discussions concerning the conditions of peace, and that the Prussian officials at Berlin had no authority to enter upon such matters.

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Before anything definite was decided upon as to how the Prussian Government was to be approached, Thiers started upon his historic mission to the Courts of the various Great Powers with the object of enlisting their practical sympathy on behalf of France.

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[268] Italian for an unwelcome person.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Paris, Sept. 12, 1870.

> The provisional Government, though the most moderate and regular I ever heard of, is sometimes a little sudden in its movements; and accordingly Thiers's mission was announced in the *Journal Official* before Jules Favre mentioned it to me, though I must do him the justice to say that he came at an early hour for the purpose. It is patriotic of Thiers to undertake it at his age, and with a prospect at best of assisting to make a bitter peace just supportable. I am glad you should hear from him the real state of things as to the internal condition and prospects of society and Government in France. He will also, I suppose, bring you the last word of the Provisional Government on peace. My impression is that they will give up almost anything to save territory; but they are, or at all events believe themselves, capable of a great *coup de désespoir*[269] rather than yield that. The Reds within are more likely to give permanent trouble than the Prussians without.
>
> Some of my colleagues are I am afraid rather cross at my not setting them the example of going off to Tours. The notion under present circumstances seems to me most injudicious. Either the French will make terms as soon as the enemy approach Paris, or being unable to do so, they will stand a siege and announce a desperate resistance. Upon this last contingency coming to pass we had better get out of Paris as fast as we can; but if there is negotiation we may possibly be of use here, while we could certainly be of none at Tours, to say nothing of the absurdity of our going off under present circumstances to Tours, without the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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The various interviews which took place between Thiers and Lord Granville have been described at length by Lord Fitzmaurice.[271] In the main, the causes of the war, as expounded by Thiers, were in accordance with those described by Lord Lyons in the letters previously quoted, although he seems to have unjustly laid much of the responsibility upon the Empress, and to have unduly exalted his own prescience, having always been obsessed with the idea that he was a military genius. As for the form of government in France, although an Orleanist himself, he considered that Bonapartists, Bourbons, and Orleanists were all out of the question for the time being, and that a Republic was the only possible solution under existing circumstances. To put it shortly, he had started on his mission through Europe in order to obtain intervention, and had began with England in order to persuade her if possible to use her moral influence in securing peace. This application was supported by much high-sounding rhetoric on the subject of the ancient friendship between England and France, and of the necessity of the former retaining her due ascendency in the Councils of Europe, etc., etc., etc. Exhausted at the conclusion of his eloquent arguments, he

[269] Fit of despair.
[270] The reference to page 317 is missing in the original and its place has been estimated.
[271] Edmond George Petty-Fitzmaurice, 1st Baron Fitzmaurice, PC FBA (19 June 1846 – 21 June 1935), styled Lord Edmond FitzMaurice from 1863 to 1906, was a British Liberal politician. He served as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1883 to 1885 and again from 1905 to 1908, when he entered the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under H. H. Asquith. He was a younger brother of the 5th Marquess of Lansdowne who was in turn, Governor General of Canada, Viceroy of India, War Minister then Foreign Secretary from 12 November 1900 – 4 December 1905.

went to sleep, as recorded by Lord Granville, without waiting to listen to the latter's reply, and the really practical part of the conversation seems to have been the suggestion that the way should be paved by the British Government for an interview between Jules Favre and Bismarck.

On the next day Thiers proposed that H.M. Government should at once recognize the Republic; but to this Lord Granville demurred, on the ground that it would be contrary to precedent, and that the Republic had at present no legal sanction, because no Constituent Assembly had yet decided on the future government of the country.

Upon the occasion of a third interview, Thiers's arguments seem to have been still more forcible.

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Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, Sept. 16, 1870.

> I called again on M. Thiers at his request to-day. He thanked me for the letter which I had written to Bernstorff, although he thought it might have been in warmer terms.
>
> He informed me of his plan to go to Petersburg, by France, Turin and Vienna. He said that by that way he should be within reach of telegraphic and other news, and could be recalled, if wanted. He should go back if his concurrence was absolutely necessary to the conclusion of peace. He admitted that it would be most painful to sign any peace at this time; that M. Jules Favre, on the contrary, did not dislike the notion of it.
>
> He spoke sanguinely of the defence of Paris: he counted the number of armed men and the completeness of the ordnance. He gave some credence to the report of General Bazaine's[272] bold march. He then came back to the subject of England's apathy: he dwelt upon the loss to her dignity; the danger to her and to all Europe of the immense preponderance of Germany. Austria must lose her German provinces. What would not 60,000,000 Germans do, led by such a man as Bismarck? I told him that I would not further discuss that matter with him, and that his arguments went further than his demands. They were in favour of an armed intervention. I had no doubt of what public opinion here was on that point. He spoke of the sad task he had undertaken, at his age, to go from Court to Court, almost as a mendicant, for support to his country. I told him that it was most honourable to him at his age, and after his long public life, to undertake a task in which it was thought that he might be of use,

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> and that he ought not to be discontented with his mission here. He could hardly have hoped, even with his ability, to change the deliberate course of policy which H.M. Government had adopted, and which they had announced to Parliament. But his second object, that of

[272] François Achille Bazaine (13 February 1811 – 23 September 1888) was an officer of the French army. Rising from the ranks, during four decades of distinguished service (including 35 years on campaign) under Louis-Philippe and then Napoleon III, he held every rank in the army from fusilier to Marshal of France, the latter in 1863. At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Bazaine took field command of the French front line forces of III Army Corps of the Army of the Rhine near Metz.

> explaining the necessity at this moment of the present Government in France, and of the merits of M. Favre and General Trochu, and its leading members, had had much effect upon me, and upon others with whom he had conversed. We had also during his presence here arranged the possibility of a meeting between M. Favre and Count Bismarck, which if it took place (about which I was not sanguine) must, in any case, be of some use.
>
> We parted in a most friendly manner.

The offer to sound Bismarck on the question of receiving Jules Favre was enthusiastically received by the latter, who had a strong personal feeling on the subject. As, however, he had just concocted the celebrated proclamation that France would never consent to yield "a stone of her fortresses or an inch of her territory," he could hardly be said to approach the question of peace in a practical spirit, nor did he receive much assistance from his countrymen in general, for at that period no Frenchman could be found who was willing to admit openly the possibility of a cession of territory, whatever opinions may have been entertained in secret. Shrewder judges than Jules Favre, who, although able and honest, was too emotional for diplomatic work, suspected, with reason, that Bismarck was determined not to negotiate through neutrals, and not to negotiate at all except under the walls of Paris or in Paris itself.

The emissary appointed to approach Bismarck was Malet, who was selected because he was discreet, knew German well, and was already acquainted with Bismarck, but no sooner had he been despatched than the Austrian

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Ambassador, Metternich, announced that he had received authority from Vienna to go in company with his colleagues to the Prussian Headquarters. Efforts were made to stop Malet, but fortunately without success, and the private letter from the latter (extracts of which have already been published) recounting his interview, is a singularly graphic and interesting presentment of Bismarck's real disposition.

Mr. Malet to Lord Lyons
Paris, September 17, 1870.

> During my two interviews with Count Bismarck on the 15th he said some things which it may not be uninteresting to Your Lordship to know although from the confidential familiar manner in which they were uttered, I did not feel justified in including them in an official report.
>
> He stated it was the intention to hang all persons not in uniform who were found with arms. A man in a blouse had been brought before him who had represented that he was one of the Garde Mobile: Count Bismarck decided that as there was nothing in his dress to support his assertion he must be hung, and the sentence was forthwith carried into effect. His Excellency added, "I attach little value to human life because I believe in another world—if we lived for three or four hundred years it would be a different matter." I said that although some of the Mobile wore blouses, each regiment was dressed in a uniform manner and that they all bore red collars and stripes on their wristbands. His Excellency replied

that that was not enough, at a distance they looked like peasants and until they had a dress like other soldiers those who were taken would be hung.

He said. "When you were a little boy you wanted your mother to ask a lady, who was not of the best position in society, to one of her parties, your mother refused on which you threw yourself on the ground and said you would not rise till you had got what you wanted. In like manner we have thrown

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ourselves on the soil of France and will not rise till our terms are agreed to." In speaking of the surrender of the Emperor he observed, "When I approached the carriage in which the Emperor was His Majesty took off his cap to salute me. It is not the custom for us when in uniform to do more than touch the cap—however I took mine off and the Emperor's eyes followed it till it came on a level with my belt in which was a revolver when he turned quite pale—I cannot account for it. He could not suppose I was going to use it but the fact of his changing colour was quite unmistakable. I was surprised that he should have sent for me, I should have thought I was the last person that he would wish to receive him because he has betrayed me. All that has passed between us made me feel confident that he would not go to war with Germany. He was bound not to do so and his doing it was an act of personal treachery to me. The Emperor frequently asked whether his carriages were safe out of Sedan, and a change indicating a sense of great relief came over him when he received news of their arrival in our lines. M. de Bismarck talked in the most contemptuous terms of M. de Gramont, allowing him only one merit that of being a good shot. He touched on the publication of the secret treaty, but his arguments in defence of it were rather too subtle for me to seize them clearly. He said the secret should have died with him had France had a tolerable pretext for going to war, but that he considered her outrageous conduct in this matter released him from all obligation.

"If," he remarked, "a man asks the hand of my daughter in marriage and I refuse it I should consider it a matter of honour to keep the proposal a secret as long as he behaved well to me, but if he attacked me I should be no longer bound. This is quite a different question from that of publishing a secret proposition at the same time that you refuse it; you must be a Beust or an Austrian to do that."

In talking of the scheme to replace the Emperor on the throne by the aid of Bazaine and the French Prisoners in Germany, I asked whether His Majesty was now in a state of health to be willing to undertake such a work. He answered that he never in his life had seen the Emperor in the enjoyment

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of better health and he attributed it to the bodily exercise and the diet which late events had forced upon him.

Count Bismarck spoke of Italy and appeared to think that it was in immediate danger of Republican revolution. He said "If," as appeared likely at the beginning, "Italy had sided

> with France such a movement would have broken out at once; we had everything prepared, and could have forced on a revolution within three days after a declaration of war."
>
> On leaving him he asked me if I had a horse, saying, "I would offer you mine but the French are in the habit of firing on our Parlementaires and as I have only one I cannot afford to lose it."

From the French point of view there was very little encouragement to be derived from these frank and even brutal opinions, but one result of some importance was obtained, for at the close of the interview, Bismarck intimated to Malet "as a friend" that if a member of the Government of National Defence chose to come he would be happy to receive him, and added that he need feel no anxiety as to the nature of his reception. Upon returning to Paris, Malet gave this message to Jules Favre at the British Embassy, and although the latter said nothing at the moment, he proceeded shortly afterwards to Ferrières, where the celebrated interview took place, and the opportunity of making peace on easy terms was thrown away, for "as an old friend" Bismarck had also assured Malet that the Prussians were not going to ask for Alsace or Lorraine, but only for Strasburg and Metz, as a precaution against future attacks.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE (1870-1871)

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The investment of Paris being now imminent, the Diplomatists had to make up their minds as to whether they should remain or leave, and the latter course was adopted.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Tours, Sept. 19, 1870.

> I was a good deal put out at having to leave Paris. The interest is still there: there was no danger in staying, and of course the Diplomatists could have got the Prussians to let them through the lines. But as soon as Jules Favre himself advised that I should go, I had nothing to say to my colleagues of the Great Powers, whom I had withstood, not without difficulty, for some time. At all events I could not have stayed if they went, without exposing myself to all kinds of misrepresentation, and presenting myself to the public and Foreign Powers as the special partisan and adviser of the present French Government. The Representatives of the small Powers, or most of them, want to be able to go home when they leave Paris, and are very much afraid of the expense and difficulty of finding lodgings here. Well they may be: I myself spent eight hours yesterday walking about or sitting on a trunk in the *porte cochère* of the hotel, and have at last, in order not to pass the night *à la belle étoile*,[273] had to come to a house out of the town.

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> I don't expect much from Jules Favre's interview with Bismarck, but I am very impatient to know whether he was received, and if so, what passed. I should be glad that Bismarck should distinctly announce his terms, though I can hardly hope they will be such as France will accept now. But it would be well, whatever they are, that the French should know them, and thus get their minds accustomed to them, and so know also what amount of resistance is better than yielding to them. I myself think that the loss of territory and the humiliation of France and the great diminution of her power and influence would be great evils and great sources of danger: but, if we can have no means of preventing them, I am certainly anxious that we should not aggravate them by holding out hopes that our mediation could effect a change, or rather by allowing the hopes to be formed, which the mere fact of our mediating could not but give rise to. I have read with great interest the accounts of your conversations with Thiers, and have been still more interested by your correspondence with Bernstorff on "benevolent neutrality." On his part it is just the old story I used to hear in America from the Northerners: "The ordinary rules of neutrality are very well in ordinary wars, such as those in which we were neutrals, but our present cause is so pre-eminently just, noble and advantageous to humanity and the rest of the world, that the very least other nations can do is to strain the laws of neutrality, so as to make them operate in our favour and against our opponents."

[273] Sitting in the entrance for horses and carriages and passing the night under the stars.

> Thiers himself was expected here yesterday. Jules Favre did not say positively that he was coming here himself, but he gave me to understand that it was not improbable he should do so. He must make haste, for we hear that the railway we came by is already broken up, and all the others were impassable before.

As Lord Lyons's departure from Paris to Tours was practically the only action in the course of his career which was

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subjected to anything like unfavourable criticism, it is desirable to point out that as far back as August 31, Lord Granville had written to him in these words: "I presume that your post will be with the Government as long as it is acknowledged; and that if the Empress and her Foreign Minister go to Lyons or elsewhere, you would go too." It is almost inconceivable that any one should have advocated the retention of the Ambassador in Paris after that city had been cut off from the outside world; some of the members of the Government, it is true, including Jules Favre remained there, but the *de facto* Government of the country was temporarily established at Tours, and when Tours seemed likely to share the fate of Paris, the Government was transferred to Bordeaux. It was so obviously the duty of diplomatists to remain in touch with the French Government that the wonder is that any objection should ever have been raised, and, as has already been narrated, Lord Lyons had been urged to move long before he would consent to do so. The action of the Ambassador was the subject of an attack upon him subsequently in Parliament by the late Sir Robert Peel,[274] which proved singularly ineffective.

Few people had anticipated much result from Jules Favre's visit to Bismarck, and when the latter insisted upon a surrender of territory being accepted in principle, the French envoy burst into tears. According to Bismarck this display of emotion was entirely artificial, and he even accused Jules Favre of having painted his face grey and green in order to excite sympathy, but in any case it became perfectly plain that no agreement was in sight and that the war would have to continue. In justice to the French it must be said that Bismarck seemed to have made his

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terms as harsh in form as they were stringent in substance, and it was difficult to conceive any Government subscribing to his conditions; as for poor Jules Favre he had to console himself by issuing a stirring address to his fellow-countrymen.

Although the French public naturally began to display some impatience and irritation at the slowness with which "Victory" was being organized, and to talk of Carnot,[275] the old Republic,

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[274] This must be Sir Robert Peel, 3rd Baronet, GCB, PC (4 May 1822 – 9 May 1895) who was a British Peelite, Liberal and from 1884 until 1886 Conservative Member of Parliament (MP). He was the eldest son of Sir Robert Peel who died in 1850 after being Prime Minister briefly from 10 December 1834 – 8 April 1835 and again from 30 August 1841 – 29 June 1846. George Clement Boase, author of an article on him in the *Dictionary of National* Biography (1895) stated "The want of moral fibre in his volatile character, an absence of dignity, and an inability to accept a fixed political creed, prevented him from acquiring the confidence of his associates or of the public."

[275] Lazare Hippolyte Carnot (6 October 1801 – 16 March 1888) was a French politician. He was the younger brother of the founder of thermodynamics Sadi Carnot and the second son of the revolutionary politician

and the necessity of a Red Republic if heroes were to be produced, the Tours Government continued to hold its own fairly well; there was little trouble about the finances; disorders were suppressed, and the arrival of Gambetta[276] infused a good deal of energy into the administration. After the manner of French statesmen, Gambetta, upon his arrival at Tours, issued a spirited proclamation, announcing *inter alia*[277] that Paris was impregnable, and explaining that as the form of Government had changed from a shameful and corrupt autocracy to a pure and unsullied Republic, success was a moral certainty. Gambetta, who had assumed the office of Minister of War, summoned to his assistance the veteran Garibaldi,[278] and the arrival of the former obviously embarrassed the peace-loving diplomatists, who expressed regret that his balloon had not capsized on the way from Paris.

By the middle of October, however, the French Government began to show signs of wiser dispositions.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Tours. Oct. 16, 1870.

> As you will see by my long despatch of to-day, I went yesterday with the Comte de Chaudordy[279] into the
>
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>
> questions of the "*pouce de notre territoire*" and the "*pierres de nos forteresses.*" [280] The fortresses have in point of fact been tacitly abandoned for a long time, provided the dismantling them only, not the cession of them to Prussia is demanded.

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and general Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot, who also served in the government of Napoleon, as well as the father of French president Marie François Sadi Carnot. On 8 February 1871 he was elected deputy for the Seine-et-Oise département. He joined the Gauche républicaine parliamentary group and participated in the drawing up of the Constitutional Laws of 1875. On 16 December 1875 he was named by the National Assembly senator for life. He died three months after the election of his elder son, Marie François Sadi Carnot, to the presidency of the republic.

[276] Léon Gambetta (2 April 1838 – 31 December 1882) was a French lawyer and republican politician who proclaimed the French Third Republic in 1870 and played a prominent role in its early government.

[277] Among other things.

[278] Giuseppe Maria Garibaldi (4 July 1807 – 2 June 1882) was an Italian general, revolutionary and republican. He contributed to Italian unification (Risorgimento) and the creation of the Kingdom of Italy. Following the wartime collapse of the Second French Empire after the Battle of Sedan, Garibaldi, undaunted by the recent hostility shown to him by the men of Napoleon III, switched his support to the newly declared Government of National Defense of France. Subsequently, Garibaldi went to France and assumed command of the Army of the Vosges, an army of volunteers. After the war he was elected to the French National Assembly, where he briefly served as a member of Parliament for Alpes-Maritimes.

[279] Representative at Tours of the French Foreign Office. (LN). Count Jean-Baptiste-Alexandre-Damase de Chaudordy or Jean-Baptiste-Alexandre-Damaze de Chaudordy (4 December 1826 – 26 March 1899) was a French diplomat and politician. He was notably Ambassador of France to Switzerland and Spain, and the representative of France at the Constantinople Conference in 1876 and 1877.

[280] Inch of our territory and stone of your fortresses.

M. de Chaudordy said that he would tell me what was in the bottom of his heart about the cession of territory, if I would promise to report it to your Lordship only in such a form as would ensure it never being published now or hereafter, or even being quoted or referred to.

Having received my promise and taken all these precautions, he said that he did not regard some cession of territory as altogether out of the question. The men at present in office certainly could not retreat from their positive declaration that they would never yield an inch of territory; but if the interests of France appeared to require positively that the sacrifice should be made, they would retire from office, and give place to men who were unshackled, and not only would they abstain from opposing such men, but would give them full support in signing a peace, which, however painful, appeared to be necessary. M. de Chaudordy was convinced and indeed had reason to know that the men now in office had patriotism enough to act in this way in case of need, but he could not authorize me to tell you this as a communication from the individuals themselves, much less as a communication from the French Government. It would be ruin to the men themselves and to the cause, if it should transpire that such an idea had ever been contemplated at a moment like this. For it to be carried into effect with any success, it must appear to rise at the critical time out of the necessities of the hour.

He concluded by reminding me of my promise that what he had said should never be published or even referred to.

I thanked him for the confidence he had placed in me, and assured him that he need not have the least fear that it would be abused. I said however at the same time that he must feel, as I did, that however useful it might be to be aware of the disposition he had mentioned, as entertained by the men in power, it would be very difficult for a Government to make information, given with so much reserve, the foundation of any positive measures.

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This criticism was sufficiently obvious. If the information was never to go beyond Lord Lyons and Lord Granville, of what practical use could it be? It can only be supposed that those who sent Chaudordy, intended that his confidential communication should somehow or other reach the Prussian Government.

Hard upon Chaudordy, followed a man destined before long to achieve a melancholy celebrity, General Bourbaki.[281] General Bourbaki had been the victim of a strange mystification, which resulted in his being permitted to leave Metz upon a secret mission to the Empress at Chislehurst, and when it was discovered that the whole thing was an ingenious fraud perpetrated by one Regnier (probably with the connivance of Bismarck), and that the Empress had never sent for him at all,

[281] Charles Denis Sauter Bourbaki (22 April 1816 – 22 September 1897) was a French general. In 1870 the Emperor Napoleon III entrusted Bourbaki with the command of the Imperial Guard, and he played an important part in the fighting around Metz. His conduct at the Battle of Gravelotte in August 1870 was questioned because, while the Prussians were exhausted from the fighting, and the French were poised to mount a counter-attack, Bourbaki refused to commit the reserves of the French Imperial Guard to the battle because he considered it a defeat.

he returned to France, but was not permitted to re-enter Metz. Consequently, he repaired to Tours and gave the Ambassador the benefit of his views.

General Bourbaki, as a professional soldier, took a most gloomy view of the military situation. He did not think that an army capable of coping with the Prussians in the field in anything like equal numbers could be formed in less than five or six months, even with first-rate military organizers at the head of affairs, instead of the present inexperienced civilians. According to him, the Army of Metz was in admirable condition and might perhaps break out, but even so, where was it to go? Its provisions and ammunition would be exhausted long before it could get to any place where they could be replenished. As the surrender of Paris was really only a question of time, the most

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prudent thing to do would be to make peace whilst those two fortresses were still holding out, and it would be to the interest of Prussia to do so, because if Metz fell, Bazaine's army would disappear, and there would be no Government left in France with whom it would be possible to treat, and the Prussians would, therefore, be forced to administer the country as well as occupy it. The Provisional Government, who must have had a high opinion of Bourbaki, offered him the title of Commander-in-Chief and the command of the Army of the Loire, but he declined the honour on the ground that he would not be given unlimited military powers, and that nothing could be effected under the orders of civilians absolutely devoid of military capacity.

Another visitor was M. Daniel Wilson,[282] who achieved a sinister notoriety during the Presidency of M. Grévy[283] in connection with the alleged sale of honours, etc. Wilson's object was to urge the desirability of summoning a Constituent Assembly without delay, as he and his moderate friends were convinced that such a body would be in favour of peace. He himself considered the prosecution of the war under existing circumstances to be a crime, and he was not disposed to allow the six or seven men who had seized upon the Government, to achieve the ruin of France. Their only excuse for postponing the elections was the difficulty of holding them in the districts occupied by the Prussians, but if an armistice could be obtained, that difficulty would disappear, and an armistice of only fifteen days would make the resumption of hostilities impossible. The interest attaching to this visit lay in the fact that a peace party was now actually in existence, whereas the Provisional Government at Tours, the Ministers left

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in Paris, and the advanced Republicans seemed to be still fully bent upon war *à outrance*,[284] and as little willing as ever to hear of a cession of territory.

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[282] Daniel Wilson (6 March 1840 – 13 February 1919). (From Wikipedia article in French.)
[283] François Judith Paul Grévy (15 August 1807 – 9 September 1891), known as Jules Grévy was a French lawyer and politician. As a member of the National Assembly of the French Second Republic, he became known for his opposition to Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. During the 1851 coup d'état by Louis-Napoléon he was briefly imprisoned, and afterwards retired from political life. With the downfall of the Second French Empire and the reestablishment of the Republic in 1870, Grévy returned to prominence in national politics. After occupying high offices in the National Assembly and the Chamber of Deputies, he was elected president of France from 1879 to 1887
[284] To excess.

Bazaine capitulated on October 27, and shortly afterwards Thiers who had returned to Paris from his circular tour round the Courts of Europe proceeded to the Prussian Headquarters to discuss with Bismarck the question of an armistice, a course of action which the Provisional Government had agreed to, provided it were initiated by a third party. The attitude, however, of Gambetta and his friends did not encourage much hope of success.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Tours, Oct. 31, 1870.

> Gambetta's Proclamation and the language Chaudordy has again been directed to hold about cession of territory, will show you how vain it is to try to induce these people to give a negotiation a fair chance by abstaining during the course of it from violent and imprudent language.
>
> Nothing can look worse for France than things do at this moment. A reign of terror, perseverance in hostilities until the country is utterly ruined, a dissolution of all order and discipline in the army, and a total disorganization of society might seem to be threatened. I take comfort from the thought that much allowance must be made for the first ebullition of grief and rage at the surrender of Bazaine, and that some of Gambetta's fire and fury may be intended to divert blame from himself for a catastrophe which he did nothing to prevent. Anyhow things are gloomy enough, and I am nervous and uneasy about Thiers and his mission, and should be glad to hear that he was at least safe out of Paris again.

The news of the capitulation of Metz was at once followed by an unsuccessful outbreak against the Government in

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Paris, headed by the well-known revolutionary, Gustave Flourens,[285] who seized the Ministers and proclaimed the Commune at the Hotel de Ville. The Ministers, however, were shortly liberated by the Garde Mobile and National Guards and order was restored without much difficulty in the course of a few hours. Flourens, who was subsequently shot by the Versailles troops during the suppression of the Commune in 1871, was generally regarded as the most formidable "man of action," and had lately been residing in London. It is interesting to record the impression which the wasted potentialities of England made upon this impartial visitor. *Me voici, avec mes amis Félix Pyat et Louis Blanc à Londres, dans ce pays d'Angleterre qui pourrait être si grand à*

[285] Gustave Flourens (4 August 1838 in Paris – 3 April 1871) was a French Revolutionary leader and writer, son of the physiologist Jean Pierre Flourens (who was Professor at the Collège de France and deputy in 1838-1839). He was one of the organizers of the October 1870 uprising against the provisional government's moderate policy. On 18 March he joined the population's uprising, was elected a member of the revolutionary Commune by the 20tha arrondissement, and was named general. After a sortie against the Versailles troops in the morning of 3 April, he fled into an inn near the bridge that separates Chatou and Rueil. There, after he was captured and disarmed by the Gendarmerie, he was murdered by Captain Jean-Marc Démaret

condition de n'avoir point ni les Lords ni la Bible![286] One almost wishes that he had been spared to witness the operation of the Parliament Act.

The Paris Government, adroitly profiting by the overthrow of Flourens and his friends, at once organized a plébiscite in the city, and emerged triumphantly with over 500,000 votes recorded in their favour as against 60,000 dissentients. This was all to the good, as it showed that moderate opinions were still in the ascendency, and whereas the fall of Metz was at first received with frantic cries of rage and war to the knife, people began to look a little more calmly on its effect on the military situation, and hopes were entertained that the mission of Thiers to Bismarck, which had been promoted by Her Majesty's Government, would result in the conclusion of an armistice. These hopes were doomed to disappointment, for after several interviews at Versailles, during the

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course of which an agreement for some time appeared probable, negotiations were finally broken off on the question of revictualling the various fortresses, more especially Paris.

Thiers, who had repaired to Tours after the failure of his efforts, gave Lord Lyons in strict confidence a full and interesting account of his negotiations with Bismarck.

At the first important interview, which took place at Versailles on November 1, no serious objection was raised to the proposals of the French Government, and after a conversation which lasted two or three hours, Thiers took his leave with good hopes for the success of the negotiation.

The second conference, on the following day, passed equally satisfactorily. On Thursday, the 3rd, Bismarck kept Thiers waiting a short time, and said that he had been detained at a military meeting held by the King. He seemed annoyed and irritable, and indeed on one occasion, quite lost his temper. Nevertheless, Thiers resenting this, he apologized and assumed a civil and indeed caressing demeanour. He asserted that *les militaires*,[287] as he always called them, made objections to the proposed revictualling of Paris and that they also had some reservations to make with respect to the suggested elections. *Les militaires* also urged that if, as proposed, Paris were to be provisioned during twenty-five days' armistice, those days would be absolutely lost to the German arms, and the surrender of the town deferred for at least that time. On being sounded as to what might be considered an equivalent, it appeared that two or more of the detached forts, or some other concession equally inadmissible,

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would be demanded. On finding, therefore, that Bismarck was unshaken in declaring that positively *les militaires* would not allow Paris to be revictualled, Thiers had no alternative but to withdraw from the negotiation and to request facilities for communicating the result to the Government in Paris. *Les militaires*, it will be observed, played much the same convenient part in this affair as the King of Prussia in the arguments used against Lord Clarendon's secret disarmament proposals.

[286] Here I am, with my friends Felix Pyat and Louis Blanc, in London, in that country of England which could be so great if it didn't have the Lords nor the Bible!
[287] The military.

Upon the Paris Government becoming acquainted with these terms, Jules Favre directed Thiers to break off the negotiations and leave Versailles immediately; a decision which Bismarck stated caused him great regret and induced him to suggest that elections should be held even while hostilities were going on. He made no offer, however, of any concession with regard to the revictualling of Paris.

The conclusion which Thiers arrived at was that there was both a political and a military party at the Prussian Headquarters. The political party, with which Bismarck himself to a great extent agreed, was desirous of bringing the war to an end by concluding peace on comparatively moderate terms. The military party held that the glory of the Prussian arms and the future security of Germany demanded that the rights of war should be pushed to the utmost, and that France should be laid waste, ruined, and humiliated to such a degree as to render it impossible for her to wage war again with Germany for very many years. He could not, however, discover even among the most moderate of the so-called political party any one who seemed to ask less than the cession of Alsace and of that part

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of Lorraine in which German is spoken. It seems clear that Bismarck impressed Thiers with his sincerity at the commencement of the negotiations, and with the belief that he was subsequently overruled by *les militaires*, but whenever it was suggested that the armistice had been proposed to both parties by the neutral Powers, Bismarck showed much "impatience and annoyance." He showed Thiers the letters which the Emperor Alexander had written to the King of Prussia. They were "warm, earnest letters," but written as from a friend to a friend, without in the least assuming the tone of a sovereign addressing a brother sovereign on a matter concerning the relations of their respective Governments. Of Great Britain, it is sad to learn, he spoke with "special ill-humour." One subject upon which he touched is not without interest at the present day. He complained bitterly of the treatment to which the crews of captured German merchant vessels were subjected, and said that he should give orders to have an equal number of French non-combatants arrested and treated in the same way. When it was mildly suggested that this would hardly be in accordance with international maritime law, he exclaimed with some violence: "Who made the code of maritime law? You and the English, because you are powerful at sea, it is no code at all, it is simply the law of the strongest!" To this Thiers appears to have retorted that he, Bismarck, did not on all occasions seem disposed to repudiate the law of the strongest.

So far as the convocation of a National Assembly was concerned Bismarck alleged complete indifference, explaining that he had now two Governments with which to treat, one at Paris, and the other at Wilhelmshöhe, and

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although he expressed unmitigated contempt for the Emperor Napoleon, he was nevertheless quite ready to make use of him to attain his ends.

During the fruitless negotiations which had taken place, first when conducted by Jules Favre, and secondly when conducted by Thiers, the British Government found itself in a somewhat embarrassing position. It was perfectly sincere in desiring to bring about peace between France and Prussia, but it was unwilling to identify itself with the one proposal which would have had that

effect, *viz*. the cession of territory, and the perplexity in which the English Ministers found themselves is illustrated by a letter from Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyons.

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyons
11, Carlton House Terrace, Nov. 7, 1870.

I have seen your letter to Lord Granville in which you notice that in a note to him I had expressed a hope you would not allow the French to suppose we adopted their view as to integrity of territory.

I do not recollect the exact words to which you may refer, but I write a line lest I should by chance have conveyed a false impression.

At an earlier stage of this tremendous controversy, the French took their stand upon inviolability of soil. That ground always seemed to me quite untenable in the case of a country which had made recent annexations.

The French also declared that they would surrender neither an inch of their territory nor a stone of their fortresses. This appeared to me an extravagant proposition, and, what is more important, I venture to say it was thought unreasonable by my colleagues and by the country generally. It is possible that my note may have referred to either of these views on the part of France.

But I am very sorry if I have conveyed to you on my own part, or by implication on the part of any one else, the belief that we approved of, or were in our own minds indifferent to the transfer of Alsatians and Lorrainers from France to Germany against their will.

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On this subject, I for one, entirely concur with the opinions you have so admirably expressed in your letter, and I should be to the last degree reluctant to be a party not only to stimulating a German demand of this kind, but even to advising or promoting a compliance with it on the part of France.

All this you will see is quite distinct from and consistent with the desire which you and which we all entertain that the Defence Government of France should not needlessly deal in abstract declarations, and with a full approval of your reticence as to the conditions of peace.

On the failure of the armistice I think the Cabinet will disperse, as having nothing more to consider in the present circumstances. I cannot help feeling doubtful whether the Prussians do not lose more than the French by the unhappy failure of the negotiations.

We are all more grieved at the failure than surprised.

It is difficult to read much meaning into the above involved epistle. How, for instance, could any fortresses be surrendered without Alsatians and Lorrainers being handed over to Prussia? Put into

plain language, the letter presumably meant that H.M. Government was anxious to remain friends with both sides, but was afraid to make the one recommendation to the French which would have been of any use, and hoped that the proposal of a cession of territory would eventually be made on the latter's initiative.

Thiers, who in the course of his tour round the capitals of Europe had vigorously denounced (especially to the Italians) the apathy and selfishness of England, now intimated to the Ambassador that he was willing to go back to London if he could contribute, by so doing, to bring about an armistice and a peace, but received no

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encouragement; partly because it was thought that the less the British Government did, which appeared to be prompted by France, the more Bismarck might be inclined to yield, and partly because it would cause irritation in France, if Thiers made another formal expedition to England without producing any marked result.

A momentary elation was just about this time produced at Tours by the victory of General d'Aurelle des Paladines[288] and the recapture of Orleans, but Gambetta does not appear to have lost his head in consequence of this temporary success or to have attached undue importance to it. Gambetta's opinion was that France could hold out for four months, and that the Germans would not be able to stay so long in the country. He told Lord Lyons that he approved of the armistice on the terms proposed by the Government of Paris, and implied that he did, rather than not, approve of the readiness of that Government to conclude one still, if through the representations of the neutrals Prussia should yet be brought to consent to reasonable terms for one. He manifested great indignation at Bismarck's contention that there was no Government in France, maintained that the Government of National Defence was a properly constituted Government entitled to exercise all the powers of the nation, and said that there was no need whatever of a Constitutional Assembly. As for General d'Aurelle des Paladines, his hour of triumph was soon terminated; the Prussians drove him out of Orleans, and his failure was ascribed by the Republicans to his action in proceeding to venerate some relics in the Orleans cathedral.

In the meanwhile Mr. Gladstone's Government found themselves confronted with a difficulty

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which had to some extent been foreseen, but which was entirely unexpected at that particular moment. In the beginning of November, Prince Gortschakoff issued a circular denouncing the

[288] Louis Jean-Baptiste d'Aurelle de Paladines (9 January 1804 – 17 December 1877) was a French general. Placed on the reserve list in 1869, he was recalled to the Marseille command on the outbreak of the Franco-German War of 1870-71. After the first capture of Orléans by the Germans, he was appointed by the Government of National Defense, in November 1870, to the command of the Army of the Loire (notwithstanding his monarchist and catholic beliefs). He was at first very successful against von der Tann-Rathsamhausen, winning the battle of Coulmiers and compelling the Germans to evacuate Orléans, but the capitulation of Metz had set free additional German troops to oppose him, and, after his defeat at Beaune la Rolande and subsequent unsuccessful fighting near Orléans, resulting in its recapture by the Germans in December, Aurelle retreated into the Sologne and was superseded.

clauses of the Treaty of Paris which related to the Black Sea. Lord Granville communicated the intelligence in a letter to Lord Lyons dated November 11.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, Nov. 11, 1870.

> The shell has fallen suddenly. I expected it, but not in so abrupt a form. If it was to come, I am not sure that I regret the way it has done. Do not communicate officially my answer till the Russian Government has received theirs: the messenger leaves London to-night.
>
> I am curious to hear what the Provisional Government will say. I presume they will try to make a bargain on the subject. You will of course explain to them that it is, at the very least, a more serious subject for them than for us.
>
> The handling of the matter is delicate and difficult. We are unanimous about the first step, more in doubt about the next.
>
> If Bernstorff gets permission to give a safe conduct to Odo Russell, we mean to send him to-morrow to Versailles with our answer and a private letter from me to Bismarck. I presume there is a private understanding between Russia and Prussia, but it is not certain; Bernstorff as usual was dumb, but intimated his surprise at the form.
>
> He tells me that my question will be met with a negative as to provisioning Paris: the Generals will not hear of it. If so, I shall ask whether he will still give facilities for an election without an armistice, and then I shall request you to press the expediency of summoning a Chamber on the Provisional Government—always declaring that you do not wish to interfere with the self-government of France.

Why it should have been assumed that the action of the Russian Government was more serious as

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regards the French than ourselves, is not particularly clear. Whatever the French Government may have said in public on the subject, there can be little doubt that in secret they hailed it as a welcome diversion which might be turned to advantage. If it brought about a congress or conference, it might cause a stir amongst neutrals resulting in a check to Prussia as well as to Russia. The ingenious Thiers at once grasped at the possibility of forming an European Alliance against these two Powers.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Tours, Nov. 14, 1870.

> Thiers has just paid me so long a visit that he has left me very little time to write. His notion is that England, Austria, Italy, Turkey and Spain should now unite with France to check the aggression of Prussia and Russia, and he thinks that without war this would lead to a Congress in which all Europe would settle the terms of peace. If England lets the occasion go by, it will, in his opinion, be she, not France, who will have sunk to the rank

> of a second-rate Power. I thought my prudent course was to listen and say nothing, which, as you know, is easy with him; for he talks too well for one to be bored with him, and is quite content to talk without interruption.
>
> He had a violent argument with Chaudordy in the presence of Metternich and me on the subject of the elections. Chaudordy maintains the Government view that they are impossible without an armistice. Thiers took the other side, and at last cried out: "They will at least be much more free under the Prussians than under Gambetta's Prefects!"

In *Bismarck, his Reflections and Reminiscences,*[289] there occurs the suggestive passage:--

> "It was consequently a fortunate thing that the situation offered a possibility of doing Russia a service

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> in respect to the Black Sea. Just as the sensibilities of the Russian Court, which owing to the Russian relationship of Queen Mary were enlisted by the loss of the Hanoverian Crown, found their counterpoise in the concessions which were made to the Oldenburg connexions of the Russian dynasty in territorial and financial directions in 1866; so did the possibility occur in 1870 of doing a service not only to the dynasty, but also to the Russian Empire.... We had in this an opportunity of improving our relations with Russia."

There can hardly be a shadow of a doubt that the denunciation of the Black Sea clauses was what is vulgarly called a "put up job" between Bismarck and the Russian Government, probably arranged at Ems in the spring; but when Mr. Odo Russell made his appearance at Versailles in order to discuss the question, Bismarck assured him that the Russian action had not met with his sanction and added that the circular was ill-timed and ill-advised. (In private, he subsequently expressed the opinion that the Russians had been much too modest in their demands and ought to have asked for more.) As, however, the face of the British Government had to be saved somehow, a Conference in London was suggested, and the efforts of Lord Granville were concentrated upon an attempt to persuade the Provisional Government of France to take part in it. This proved difficult, for the French made it clear that they were not anxious to do so unless they could get some advantage out of it, and intimated that they meant to accept aid from any quarter where it might be obtained—even from the "Satanic Alliance," as Thiers called it, of Russia. One of the difficulties encountered in dealing with the French Government arose from the discrepancy

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between language used in London by the French Ambassador and that used by Chaudordy at Tours. The latter was not a Minister and the Government consequently did not feel bound to support him. Chaudordy himself took advantage of his anomalous position to talk freely and to treat what he had said, according to circumstances, as pledging or not pledging the Government, and, besides this, the Government at Tours was liable to be disavowed by the Government at Paris.

[289] His autobiography, translated from the German under the supervision of A. J. Butler, late Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge and published in London in 1898.

How serious the situation was considered to be in London may be judged by the following two letters from Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, Nov. 28, 1870.

Pray exert all your influence to obtain the assent of France to the Conference. It will of course be an annoyance to her that peace instead of war prevails, and there is no doubt that a general conflagration might be of advantage to her. But you may point out that the very nature of the question almost precludes instant and offensive war, and that hostilities distant in point of time would be nothing but an embarrassment to her.

With regard to the Diplomatic position, it is a great step for the Provisional Government that Prussia has asked us to obtain her consent to a Conference. On the other hand, it would be a severe blow to the Provisional Government if they were left out in the cold, while the other Powers were settling a question of so much interest to France.

If such an unfortunate state of things were to occur, we should do our best to protect the dignity of France, but it would be difficult. Do not encourage France to suggest delay.

Foreign Office, Nov. 30, 1870.

The French are unwisely playing the same game as they did under Gramont about the Belgian Treaty. In each case, Bismarck had the sense to do at once what was to be done.

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It is an enormous step for the Provisional Government to be recognized by Prussia, Austria, Turkey, Italy, and England as capable of attending a Conference, and it will be very foolish of them to lose the opportunity and remain out in the cold.

As London is the place, it would be my duty to issue the formal invitations; at least I suppose so. Do your best to persuade them.

The Government here wish to hold their own, but are most desirous of a prompt and peaceable solution of this “Circular” question.

We shall adhere to anything we say, but you will observe that we are not rash.

Turkey, Austria and Italy are not pleasant reeds to rest on.

If we go to war, we shall be very like the man with a pistol before a crowd, *after* he has fired it off. Do not let a pacific word, however, escape your lips.

These two letters are a sufficiently clear indication of the highly uncomfortable position in which H.M. Government found itself involved, and of the urgent necessity of discovering some face-saving formula. France being incapacitated, it could hardly be supposed that Austria and Italy

would go to war with Russia on account of a question whether Russia should or should not maintain a fleet in the Black Sea, and England with her ludicrous military establishments would therefore have been left to undertake the contest single-handed, or, at most, with the assistance of Turkey.

Ultimately, of course, a Black Sea Conference met in London, and a French representative, the Duc de Broglie,[290] put in an appearance just as it was terminating, after ineffectual efforts had been made to secure the presence of

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M. Jules Favre. Lord Fitzmaurice, in his *Life of Lord Granville*, has elaborately endeavoured to show that the Conference resulted in a triumph for British diplomacy. If the acceptance of a particular form of words (of which, by the way, no notice was taken by Count Aehrenthal[291] when he annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin), constitutes a success, then Mr. Gladstone's Government were entitled to congratulate themselves; but as the Russians got their way and established their right to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea, they could legitimately claim that for all practical purposes the triumph was theirs.

In the course of his interviews with Thiers, Bismarck had denounced England, and before the end of 1870 the feeling between England and Prussia was anything but friendly. At the outbreak of hostilities British sympathy had been almost universally on the side of Prussia, but as the war progressed, public opinion began to veer round. The change in opinion was due partly to sympathy with a losing cause, partly to an impression that the Prussians were inclined to put forward unjust and exaggerated demands, partly to the violent abuse which appeared in the press of both countries, as well as to a variety of other causes. A letter from Mr. Henry Wodehouse,[292] one of the secretaries at the Paris Embassy, shows that the Crown Prince of Prussia, whose Anglophile sympathies were well known, deplored the tone of the German papers, and alludes at the same time to a domestic squabble in high German circles, thus showing that the Prussian Government as well as the French was not entirely exempt from internal dissensions.

[290] Albert de Broglie, 4th Duke of Broglie (13 June 1821 – 19 January 1901) was a French monarchist politician, diplomat and writer (of historical works and translations). Broglie twice served as Prime Minister of France, first from May 1873 to May 1874, and again from May to November 1877.
[291] Alois Leopold Johann Baptist Graf Lexa von Aehrenthal (27 September 1854 – 17 February 1912) was a diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He became best known for promoting an energetic Austro-Hungarian foreign-policy in the Balkans, seeking cooperation with Russia and approval of Germany for actions that angered the South Slav element in the Balkans.
[292] Henry Wodehouse (1834-1873) The National Archives site shows that papers from Henry Wodehouse are lodged in Norfolk Record Office including some related to the siege of Paris. The name and location indicate a possible connection with the author, as Lord Newton was Thomas Wodehouse Legh. His mother was Emily Jane Wodehouse, daughter of the Venerable Charles Nourse Wodehouse, Archdeacon of Norwich.

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Mr. Wodehouse to Lord Lyons
Rouen, Nov. 16, 1870.

> On Monday morning, before leaving Versailles, I had an interview with the Crown Prince of Prussia at H.R.H.'s desire.
>
> H.R.H. informed me that, at the last moment, when it was thought that all was arranged for the Union of South Germany with the North German Confederation, the Würtemberg Minister, instigated, it was believed, by the Bavarian Government, had asked for a delay in order to consult the other members of the Würtemberg Government, and had started for Stuttgardt with this object. This sudden decision had caused the King of Prussia and his Government very great annoyance.
>
> H.R.H. spoke of the hostile tone lately adopted towards England by the German press, which he assured me, was quite contrary to the wishes of the Prussian Government, and that he himself much regretted it, as he feared it would give rise to a spirit of animosity between Prussia and England.
>
> H.R.H. desired me to report this conversation to Lord Granville on my arrival in England.

As was shown in the case of the American Civil War, it is extremely difficult for a neutral to keep on good terms with both parties, however much it may be desired to preserve an absolutely impartial attitude. The French blamed us because they considered that we had not rendered them the kind of assistance which they thought was due to them. The Prussians, on the other hand, were always discovering grievances which betrayed our partiality. Upon the whole it is not surprising that our attitude provoked excessive irritation on their part, for we were continually

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harping on and deploring the iniquities of war, while perfectly ready to make a handsome profit out of it by selling anything to the belligerents. The late Sir Robert Morier[293] admirably described the British attitude as it appeared to German eyes. "We sit by like a bloated Quaker, too holy to fight, but rubbing our hands at the roaring trade we are driving in cartridges and ammunition. We are heaping up to ourselves the undying hatred of this German race, that will henceforth rule the world, because we cannot muster up courage to prevent a few Brummagem[294] manufacturers from driving their unholy trade." It is only fair to add, however, that German censure was confined to England; the Americans, who exported arms in just the same way, were never denounced, but possibly this was due to the fact that they assumed a less self-righteous attitude.

Whatever may have been Bismarck's private sentiments with regard to England, he was not unconciliatory in public, and the various difficulties which arose were settled satisfactorily. One of the last unpleasant episodes was the sinking of several British merchant vessels in the Seine by

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[293] *Memoirs of Sir Robert Morier.* (LN). Sir Robert Burnett David Morier GCB GCMG PC (31 March 1826 – 16 November 1893) was a British diplomat, who served most notably as the British Ambassador to Russia between 1884 and 1893.

[294] Slang name for Birmingham.

the Prussian artillery towards the close of the year, for which compensation was demanded, and a passage in Busch's *Bismarck* shows his method of dealing with such matters. "When the Germans, a short time before the conclusion of the Preliminary Peace at Versailles, sank some English coal ships on the Lower Seine and the English made a row on the subject, the chief asked me (Lothar Bucher[295]), 'What can we say in reply?' Well, I had brought with me some old fogies on the Law of Nations and such matters.

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I hunted up what the old writers called the *Jus Angariæ*,[296] that is to say, the right to destroy the property of neutrals on payment of full compensation, and showed it to the chief. He sent me with it to Russell, who showed himself to be convinced by this 'good authority' Shortly afterwards the whole affair with the *Jus Angariæ* appeared in the *Times*. We wrote in the same sense to London, and the matter was settled."

Mr. Odo Russell, whose presence at Versailles had been utilized to ascertain what terms of peace were likely to be granted, wrote before the middle of December that he was convinced that Bismarck would refuse to treat except upon the basis of unconditional surrender, and the failure of the sorties from Paris and of the operations near Orleans caused Thiers to lose heart, although Gambetta was as determined as ever to continue the struggle and to postpone the convocation of a National Assembly for as long as possible. Thiers indeed went so far as to declare in private to the Ambassador that further resistance was useless, and that it was a crime as well as a folly to continue it. The last disasters of the French, which were partly due to two shocking pieces of bad luck—the balloon which should have brought Trochu's plan for combined action with the Army of the Loire having been blown off to Christiania, and a sudden rise of the Marne having rendered co-operation with General Vinoy[297] impossible—forced the Tours Government and the Diplomatists to migrate to Bordeaux. An offer on the part of the Foreign Office to send a warship to that port for the benefit of the Ambassador and his staff was declined with thanks: "Under ordinary circumstances, I think I am better without one, and indeed personally I should be much less afraid of the Prussians than of the Bay of Biscay."

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It used to be a tradition in after years that the sole perceptible effect of the Franco-German War upon the British Embassy was that Lord Lyons's footmen ceased temporarily to powder their hair, but to judge by a letter to Hammond, Ambassadors suffered inconveniences as well as humbler people.

It is probable too that the social disorganization produced by the war provided distinguished diplomatists, who are necessarily amongst the most ceremonious of mankind, with some novel sensations. Upon one occasion, when Lord Lyons had occasion to call upon Gambetta, the Dictator

[295] Lothar Bucher (25 October 1817 – 12 October 1892) was a German publicist and trusted aide of German chancellor Otto von Bismarck.
[296] The right of angary is the right of a belligerent (most commonly, a government or other party in conflict) to seize and use, for the purposes of war or to prevent the enemy from doing so, any kind of property on belligerent territory, including what may belong to subjects or citizens of a neutral state.
[297] Joseph Vinoy (10 August 1803 – 27 April 1880) was a French soldier, who commanded the French capital's defences during the siege of Paris in the course of the Franco-Prussian War.

was too busy to see him for some minutes, and deputed a subordinate to make his excuses. The latter began his conversation with the remark: "*Allons boire un bock*!"[298] a hospitable invitation hardly in accordance with the traditions of conventional diplomacy.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Hammond.
Bordeaux, Dec. 12, 1870.

> Many thanks for the *Bradshaw*[299] and the *Times*, and very many more for your letter of the 7th, which has just arrived by messenger.
>
> Not having the archives here, I cannot look up the regulations about the expenses of an Embassy on its travels, as this is now. What I am anxious about is that some compensation should be made to the junior members who are with me, for the additional expense they are put to by their migration. I am willing to do anything I can for them, but there are of course limits to what I can afford, and it would be utterly repugnant to all my feelings and principles, for me to have an allowance for entertaining them. In old times, when manners and feelings were different, this might do; but in the present day the

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> position of an hotel keeper for his subordinates is destructive of discipline and comfortable relations between a chief and the members of his Embassy.
>
> The difficulty of finding lodgings and the prices are much greater than they were at Paris. I have nothing but one room for study, drawing-room, bedroom and all; and have just been asked six hundred pounds a month for one floor of a moderate sized house.

The junior members alluded to included Malet and Sheffield. It had, of course, been necessary to leave some of the staff at Paris.

In spite of Thiers's failure to obtain an armistice, the French Government still made strenuous efforts in the same direction and even succeeded in pressing the Pope into their service. The latter broached the subject to Count Arnim,[300] the Prussian Minister at Rome, proposing that the revictualling of Paris should be accepted as a basis, and received a severe snub for his pains. He was informed, "in very harsh terms," that the proposal could not be considered, and further, that it was impossible to negotiate with a nation whose bad faith was scandalously exhibited by the daily appearance in arms of French officers who had given their word of honour not to serve again

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[298] Let us go for a beer.

[299] Bradshaw's was a series of railway timetables and travel guide books published by W.J. Adams and later Henry Blacklock, both of London. They are named after the founder, George Bradshaw, who produced his first timetable in October 1839.

[300] Harry Karl Kurt Eduard, Count von Arnim-Suckow (3 October 1824 – 19 May 1881) was a German diplomat. He received an appointment as ambassador to France in 1872, a post of great difficulty and responsibility. Differences soon arose between him and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck: Arnim wished to support the monarchical party that was trying to overthrow Adolphe Thiers, but Bismarck ordered him to stand aloof from all French parties.

during the war. After much haggling, the French proposals resolved themselves into three alternatives, each of which was categorically rejected by Bismarck.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Layard[301]
Bordeaux, Dec. 20, 1870.

The difficulty of communication is between this place and England, and arises from the

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utter irregularity of all trains, caused by the movements of the troops. St. Malo has become the usual port of embarkation and disembarkation for our messengers.

Things are at present at a deadlock. The French want: either a peace without cession of territory; or an armistice with the revictualling of Paris for the number of days it lasts; or a European Congress to settle the terms of peace between France and Germany. Bismarck peremptorily rejects all three proposals, and does not say precisely what his conditions of peace are. I suppose the King of Prussia holds to taking Paris as a satisfaction to military vanity, and that if the military situation continues favourable to Germany, he will accept nothing much short of unconditional surrender, while Paris resists. Of course, unless, by a miracle, Paris is relieved, its surrender is a question of time—but of how much time? They declare here that it can hold out without any very material suffering until the middle of January, and for many weeks longer, if the population will be content to live on bread and wine. But, supposing Paris to fall, will peace be made? Here it is declared that the South will still continue the war, and at any rate there seems to be every probability that the violent party will not surrender its power without a struggle. Then the financial question must soon become a difficulty. I am told that since the investment of Paris began three months ago, not less than thirty-two millions sterling have been spent. It is however idle to speculate when events march so fast. I can tell you little of the present state of the armies. Bourbaki is, I believe, at Bourges, and Chanzy[302] at Le Mans. I have a military attaché, Fielding,[303] who has been with Chanzy's army during all the affairs near Orleans and since, and who has the highest opinion of his military talents.

The acceptance, pure and simple, of the Conference on the Russian question arrived from Paris the day before yesterday.

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[301] Minister at Madrid; subsequently Ambassador at Constantinople. (LN).

[302] Antoine Eugène Alfred Chanzy (18 March 1823 – 4 January 1883) was a French general, notable for his successes during the Franco-Prussian War and as a governor of Algeria. The government of national defence recalled him from Algeria, made him a general of division, and gave him command of the XVI Corps of the Army of the Loire. The Loire army won the greatest success of the French during the entire war at Coulmiers, and followed this with another victorious action at Patay; in both engagements General Chanzy's corps performed the best. After the Second Battle of Orléans and the separation of the two wings of the French army, Chanzy was appointed to command that of the west, designated the second army of the Loire.

[303] Col. the Honble. Percy Fielding. (LN). General Sir Percy Robert Basil Feilding KCB (26 June 1827 – 9 January 1904) was a British Army officer. He was the son of William Feilding, 7th Earl of Denbigh.

Towards the close of December the remarkable elasticity of the French character was manifested in a recovery

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from the depression which had been produced by the failure of the sorties from Paris and the recapture of Orleans by the Germans. The overpowering energy of Gambetta was chiefly responsible for the creation of new armies, and the moment again appeared unfavourable for peaceful counsels. Thiers and his party considered that the Government was only pushing the country on to more complete ruin, and were urgent in their call for a National Assembly. The majority of the great towns of the South, Bordeaux included, were against an Assembly or any interference with the existing Government, and Gambetta and his adherents were determined to go on with the war and keep themselves in power by all means available. Gambetta was the only member of the Government outside Paris who counted for anything, and the moderates were placed at a considerable disadvantage owing to Jules Favre being detained there.

Thiers, who had never joined the Government, prognosticated that it would immediately come to an end upon the fall of Paris, and that a moderate (*honnête*)[304] republic would be established in the greater part of the country, while Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon and other places in the south would set up a socialistic form of government, and do an enormous amount of harm before suppression. In the opinion of competent judges, if the country could have been fairly polled at this particular period, the majority (consisting of course mainly of the peasants) would have been found to be Bonapartist, in spite of all that had taken place. The bourgeoisie and inhabitants of the smaller towns would have shown themselves to be in favour of quiet and security of property, and would therefore have probably

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voted for the Orleanists, as the best representatives of those principles; and the masses in the large towns would have turned out to be republican and socialist. A genuinely free expression of opinion would, however, have been difficult to secure, for Gambetta's prefects were, if anything, more unscrupulous than the Emperor's and, under existing circumstances, had greater means of downright intimidation.

In the closing days of 1870 fresh efforts were made by H.M. Government to start the Black Sea Conference as soon as possible, and to persuade the French to send a representative without delay. Under the circumstances, it might have been supposed that they would have named their Ambassador in London, but for some obscure reason, it was decided that Jules Favre was the only possible man, and as he was shut up in Paris it was necessary to obtain a safe conduct for him from the Germans. The following letter is of interest as an impartial appreciation of Jules Favre, and as containing some sage opinions upon the question of the Black Sea and the Dardanelles.

[304] Honest.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Bordeaux, Dec. 26, 1870.

I did all I could in favour of Tissot.[305] He would have been a much more convenient plenipotentiary than Jules Favre and have facilitated the business of the Conference and the speedy termination of it. Jules Favre is, I believe an honest and really patriotic man--by which I mean a man who will sacrifice his own position and interests to what he believes to be the real good of his country. But he has not hitherto shown himself to be a good diplomatist or a skilful negotiator, and is too much led away by his feelings to be a good practical man of business. He will at all events go to London with a real

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knowledge of the state of things in Paris, and if he thinks the convocation of a National Assembly feasible and advisable, will have more means than any one else of bringing it about in spite of Gambetta. It will be good too that he should see for himself what the real feelings and intentions of the English Government are. He is a man, who would, I should think, be touched by real kindness and consideration for his country and himself in these times, and sensitive in case anything like a slight was put upon him or them--and particularly if the situation of France were not taken very seriously by all who approach him. He was a fierce and even truculent orator in the Chamber, but in private life is mild and agreeable. His power of speaking may be an inconvenience in the Diplomatic Conference, and I fancy he is led away by his "verve" when he does get into a speech, and says sometimes things more forcible than judicious. I should think he would never himself sign a peace by which territory was yielded, but I conceive him to be a man who would make room for others to do so, and help them, if he was really convinced that it was necessary for France.

I suppose the Germans will make no difficulty about the safe conduct: it is for their interest to have some influential member of the Government who might enable peace to be made in an emergency, in which Gambetta might, if unchecked, have recourse to desperate measures.

At this moment I think the French have recovered their hope of making a successful resistance to the Dismemberment of the country. I am not very sanguine after all that has occurred, but I do think the military prospects less gloomy than they have been since Sèdan, or at all events, since Metz. You will, I conclude, soon have a really trustworthy account of things in Paris from Claremont.

The Conference, I suppose, must end in Russia carrying her main point practically, and therefore it only remains to make it as much as possible an antidote to the scheme of raising her prestige in Turkey, by the form she adopted, of setting the other parties to the Treaty at

[305] Pierre-Édouard Tissot (1831-1917), who was a politician and diplomat during the 1870s and beyond. Tissot served as a French diplomat and was notably the French Ambassador to London from 1898 to 1902. He was also involved in French politics and served as a deputy in the French National Assembly. A reference found by the AI Program Claude but with no entry in Wikipedia

> defiance. I am afraid not much can be done towards this. I should suggest a very careful consideration of the meaning of the

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> restoration to the Sultan of the right to open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus at pleasure, and a very cautious wording of the article establishing it. Otherwise, considering the weakness of the Porte, I am afraid the new right might become a snare and a danger rather than a safeguard. It was so much easier for the Porte to say: "I cannot" in answer to inconvenient importunity, than it will in future be to say: "I will not." Even under the Treaty prohibition the Turks had not the firmness they might have had in resisting demands for vessels to pass. I can conceive circumstances under which it might suit them to let a Russian fleet through into the Mediterranean, if only to be rid of it for the time in the Black Sea.

In Busch's (book) *Bismarck* there are many references to Jules Favre's emotional disposition. At the first interview which took place, a French peasant was told to keep watch outside the house where the Chancellor and Favre were negotiating, and the latter was unable to resist the temptation of making a speech to his fellow-countryman. "Favre, who had gone into the house with the Chancellor, came out and addressed his countryman in a speech full of pathos and noble sentiments. Disorderly attacks had been made, which, he said, must be stopped. He, Favre, was not a spy, but, on the contrary, a member of the new Government, which had undertaken to defend the interests of the country, and which represented its dignity. In the name of International Law and of the honour of France, he called upon him to keep watch, and to see that the place was held sacred. That was imperatively demanded by his, the statesman's, honour, as well as by that of the peasant, and so forth. The honest rustic looked particularly silly as

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he listened open-mouthed to all this high falutin, which he evidently understood as little as if it were so much Greek." Bismarck entertained a well-founded contempt for rhetoric, and Jules Favre's eloquent verbosity was to him only an instance of the way in which Frenchmen could be successfully duped. "You can give a Frenchman twenty-five lashes, and if you only make a fine speech to him about the freedom and dignity of man of which those lashes are the expression, and at the same time strike a fitting attitude, he will persuade himself that he is not being thrashed." It is probable too that Jules Favre's inability to appreciate Bismarck's undisguised cynicism contributed to the disfavour with which he was regarded as compared with the other negotiator, Thiers. When during one stage of the negotiations, Jules Favre complained that his position in Paris was very critical, Bismarck proposed to him that he should organize a rising so as to be able to suppress it whilst he still had an army at his disposal: "he looked at me quite terror-stricken, as if he wished to say, 'How bloodthirsty you are!' I explained to him, however, that that was the only right way to manage the mob."

Whatever the merits or demerits of Jules Favre, a disagreeable surprise was inflicted upon both the British Government and the Government of National Defence by a refusal on the part of Bismarck to give him a safe conduct through the German lines. At first, difficulties were raised in connection with alleged violations of flags of truce; but upon the issue of a proclamation by Jules Favre,

Bismarck took advantage of the opportunity in order to prevent his departure for London on the ground that it would imply an official recognition of the Government of National Defence.

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At all events, he made such stipulations about the way in which the safe conduct should be applied for, that Jules Favre with his strong sentimental character found it impossible to comply with them, and he was also honourably reluctant to leave Paris just before the bombardment was about to begin. Bismarck, it is clear, was determined that he should not go to London if he could prevent it. The meeting of the Conference was postponed and by the time the final arrangements in connection with it had been made, negotiations for peace had begun and it became necessary for Favre to remain in Paris.

At the close of 1870, the bombardment of Paris had not yet begun: the French hopes of military success were based upon Generals Chanzy and Bourbaki; the German terms of peace were still unknown, and there was every sign that the extreme Republicans were disposed to break with Favre and Trochu and to perpetuate their power by war *à outrance* and a *loi des suspects*,[306] or reign of terror. The most surprising feature in the situation was that Russia, who had been in fact an active ally of Prussia, by undertaking to watch Austria, and had obtained nothing whatever for France, was in much higher favour than the other blameless neutrals, it being fondly imagined that the Emperor Alexander's influence would be successful in obtaining favourable peace terms; and so adroitly did the Russians play their cards, that they persuaded Moltke that the "malevolent neutrality" of England was the sole cause of the continuance of the war. Such at least was the purport of a communication which the latter made to Mr. Odo Russell at Versailles.

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Bordeaux, Jan. 7, 1871.

> The French claim a success at Bapaume, but prudent people are already speculating on what the consequences of the fall of Paris will be. It is very generally thought that Gambetta will place himself at the head of the ultra-Republicans, throw himself into Lyons, or some other southern town, and proclaim war and democracy *à outrance*. But what will Bismarck do at Paris? Will he try to obtain a government with whom he may make a reasonable peace, or will he promote war and anarchy with a view to ruin France utterly, and induce her to accept a monarch from his hand? In the former case he will perhaps either summon the old Legislative Body, or get together some meeting of Notables, who might appoint a provisional government to sanction a National Constituent Assembly as soon as possible, and in the meantime to treat upon the preliminaries of peace. The Moderates and chiefs of the old parties (except the ultra-Republican) might be not unwilling either to attend a summons of the old *Corps Législatif*, or to some other temporary body; for they are excessively dissatisfied with their present position, and think they see symptoms of the approach of the reign of terror and of a violent socialistic government.
>
> As for Bismarck's notion of bringing back the Emperor at the head of the captive army, it is, I suppose, very doubtful whether the Emperor would give in to it, still more doubtful

[306] Law of suspects.

whether the released army would, and quite certain that the country would loathe a sovereign thus imposed upon it. If however Bismarck is bent upon it, it must be supposed that he intends to make some concessions to the Emperor to make his return to France palatable to the nation. If so, Belgium will be in danger, and Holland also, and Bismarck may return to one of his former projects of coming to an understanding with France, through the Emperor, and dealing with the small states just as he pleases. I suppose Russia will look after Denmark as well as she can. These dangers may seem visionary but I don't

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think they are so visionary as to make it superfluous to consider how they may be guarded against. Hateful as it would be to the towns and the educated classes, to have a sovereign imposed upon them by Prussia, it must not be forgotten that the peasants are still Bonapartists, and that a plébiscite in favour of the Empire might be managed.

I think I have made them feel here that you have been very friendly and considerate about Jules Favre.

At the opening of the year 1871, the hope of relieving Paris depended upon the three armies which the energy of Gambetta and the Government of National Defence had created in the North, Centre, and West, and on paper the prospects of the French were far from hopeless, for their forces in numbers far exceeded those of the Germans. In Paris alone there were supposed to be something like half a million fighting men, and the three armies above mentioned amounted to between four and five hundred thousand men. The Germans had 220,000 men in position round Paris, their forces in the provinces were numerically inferior to the French armies opposed to them, and the strain upon them must undoubtedly have been severe. The quality of Gambetta's levies, however, was unequal to the task, and as each of the French armies succumbed in turn, the fall of Paris became inevitable. The bombardment, which had been postponed as long as possible, in the hope that internal disorders would precipitate the capitulation, began in January.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Bordeaux, January 12, 1871.

If the telegraphic intelligence which is published as having come by this balloon is to be

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depended upon, the Prussians have begun the actual bombardment of the town of Paris itself, without giving Diplomatists, Neutrals, or any other non-combatants a chance of withdrawing. To say nothing of other feelings, this makes me very uneasy about the English left in the place. Most of them have perhaps only themselves to blame for staying in despite of warning but there must be many who had valid reasons, or were without the means to come away.

People are very much alarmed as to what may happen inside the town for the last two or three days, if a surrender become inevitable. There are two or three hundred thousand people (workmen and their families) who have a positive interest in the continuance of the

siege, during which they are supported by the Government without being called upon to expose themselves, or at all events without in fact exposing themselves to much danger.

The intention of not listening to terms of peace, including any cession of territory, whether Paris be taken or not, is as loudly and as positively proclaimed here as ever. I am afraid Bismarck, who certainly does not at all understand the French character, and who does not appear to have a very delicate consideration for anybody's feelings, may add to the difficulties of peace by the manner in which his conditions are propounded, as well as by the substance of them.

The Diplomatists here are beginning to talk hypothetically of what they should do if one or more Governments should be set up in France on the fall of Paris. I do not think much good comes of giving opinions beforehand on supposed cases. It is of course clear that the Diplomatic Body cannot go wandering about France in the suite of any set of men, who are not beyond dispute the *de facto* Government of the country. And I suppose, *caeteris paribus*,[307] if there be a Government in the Capital that must be taken to be the Government for the time being. It is so impossible to foresee what will happen, that I do not ask you for instructions.

Chaudordy on the other hand, continues to press for the immediate recognition of the Government of

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National Defence by England—saying that they do not want any fresh letters of credence to be presented, but would be quite satisfied with a simple note declaring that Her Majesty's Government entered into official relations with the existing Government in France. I conclude that Gambetta urges him to do this, with a view to strengthen the position of the National Defence Government or of what remains of it, if Paris falls; and on the other hand Chaudordy himself would be very glad to have obtained some decided result during his Administration of the *extra muros*[308] foreign Department. He has certainly on the whole acted with skill in a very difficult position, and France and the Government ought to congratulate themselves on having him to act for them. I don't think that Jules Favre or any member of the Government would have done anything like as well. But in France more even than in other countries a little éclat is more appreciated than years of useful unobtrusive labour.

Thiers has told me in the strictest confidence that when he was at Versailles, Bismarck offered to make peace on the basis of a pecuniary indemnity, the retention of Strasburg and Alsace, and the restoration to France of Metz and Lorraine. They seem to have brought the matter sufficiently into shape to be submitted to the Government at Paris. Thiers wanted Trochu, Picard[309] and Jules Favre to come to him to the outposts, but, as you may

[307] All other things being equal.
[308] Outside the walls or city.
[309] Louis Joseph Ernest Picard (24 December 1821 – 13 May 1877) was a French politician. From 4 September 1870 he held the portfolio of finance in the government of National Defence. In January 1871

> recollect, only Favre came. Thiers offered to take upon himself the responsibility and odium of signing a treaty on this basis, if the Government would make him its plenipotentiary, but Favre declared that it would be impossible even to mention any cession of territory even to the people of Paris.
>
> The most astonishing thing to me perhaps is the buoyancy of the French finances. I understand that the Government have by strong persuasion obtained from the *Banque de France* a new loan (it is said of upwards of twenty millions sterling) and this will keep them going for the present. There is already however, some difficulty in circulating the "bons du Trésor"[310] even at a discount.

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> I had observed the advertisements in the second columns of the *Times* and thought of trying to get the paper occasionally into Paris. In fact however the advertisers have exactly the same means of sending letters and telegrams to Paris that I have. I will nevertheless try. No special help can be expected from the Government. It is only by using the thinnest paper and reducing the despatches by means of photography that they can bring them within the weight which pigeons or secret messengers are able to carry.

There is no reason for doubting the correctness of this important statement made by Thiers, and it only shows how much more competent he was to conduct the negotiations than Jules Favre, and what a much better judge he was of the real situation than Gambetta. It would indeed be one of the ironies of history if the failure of Picard and Trochu to meet him at the outposts on that eventful day in November was the cause of the loss of a province to France, and of a vast addition to the war indemnity.

It was not long before a succession of hideous disasters demonstrated the hopelessness of the French situation. General Chanzy, in command of the army of the West, although in superior force, was completely defeated at Le Mans on January 12th. On the 19th, the Northern army under Faidherbe[311] was defeated at St. Quentin and ceased practically to take any further part in the war. On the same date a sortie from Paris on a large scale was repulsed with heavy loss, and produced amongst other results the resignation of Trochu, a sanguinary riot in the town, and the liberation from prison of Flourens and other revolutionaries. The crowning misfortune was the memorable *débâcle* of Bourbaki, one of the most tragic episodes in modern warfare. It was evident that further

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he accompanied Jules Favre to Versailles to arrange the capitulation of Paris, and the next month he became minister of the interior in Adolphe Thiers's cabinet.

[310] Treasury Bonds, which are sold by the central bank to raise money.

[311] Louis Léon César Faidherbe (3 June 1818 – 29 September 1889) was a French general and colonial administrator in what became French West Africa. Many colonial officers like Faidherbe were recalled to France in the summer of 1870 and given important commands either in new units or to replace generals killed or captured. Faidherbe was never able to form an army strong enough to seriously worry the Prussians, as his army, composed of raw recruits, suffered immense supply difficulties and low morale in the freezing winter of 1870–1871. The Army of the North performed remarkably well by striking isolated enemy forces and then retreating behind the belt of fortresses around Pas-de-Calais. Ultimately, however, Faidherbe was ordered by Minister of War Leon Gambetta to attack the Prussians – Faidherbe rushed into an open battle at St Quentin and his army was destroyed.

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resistance was useless, and the fictions which had so long sustained the spirits of the defenders of Paris were finally destroyed. On January 23, the unfortunate Jules Favre presented himself at Versailles and as there was no further question of "*pas une pierre de nos forteresses etc.,"* an armistice was finally agreed to on the 28th. Under the provisions of the armistice it was arranged that elections should be held as soon as possible for a National Assembly in order that the question of the continuance of the war, and upon what conditions peace should be made, might be decided. Jules Favre, unlucky to the last, stipulated that the National Guards should be permitted to retain their arms, a concession which he had cause bitterly to regret before long.

The news of the armistice was received at Bordeaux with rather less indignation than had been expected, but Jules Favre was loudly denounced for not having included in it Bourbaki's army, the fact being that Bismarck, who was well aware of the ruin which threatened the force, had expressly refused to do so. Gambetta, while not actually repudiating the armistice, issued violent proclamations, loudly denouncing its authors, declaring that his policy as Minister of War remained unchanged, and urging that the period of the armistice should be employed in organizing the forces which were destined to free France from the invaders. These proclamations were followed by a decree in which the liberty-loving democrat enacted that no person should be eligible for the new Assembly who was connected with the royal families which had hitherto reigned in France, or any one who had served in any capacity

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as an official under the Empire. This outrageous proceeding produced a protest from Bismarck on the ground that it was a violation of the freedom of election stipulated in the armistice, and as Gambetta continued recalcitrant, the Paris section of the Government of National Defence, which included, amongst others, Favre, Trochu, and Jules Ferry, issued another decree on February 4, annulling that of Gambetta. Representatives of the National Defence Government from Paris arrived at Bordeaux on February 6, and upon that day Gambetta resigned the office of Minister of War, and Emmanuel Arago[312] was appointed in his place. As Paris was now again in communication with the outside world, the opportunity was taken, not only of cancelling Gambetta's decrees, but of getting rid of the Delegation Government, of which he had been the virtual dictator.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Bordeaux, Feb. 7, 1871.

> So far as we can judge here (and we have not very good means of judging) the moderate Conservative "Ticket" is likely to be carried in most of the Elections. The result would be an assembly composed of men who in their own hearts will wish for peace, and whose Constituents will heartily wish for it. But there is always fear of each individually thinking it necessary to express for himself in public heroic sentiments, and of no one being willing to bell the cat and sign or even vote for ratifying the Treaty. Much of course will depend upon the terms. The cession of Alsace might possibly be submitted to, if it were distinctly apparent that it was the only means of saving Lorraine. The terms of the Armistice would

[312] Emmanuel Arago (6 August 1812, Paris – 26 November 1896, Paris) was a French politician of the French Second Republic, Second French Empire and French Third Republic.

make one hope that Bismarck is at least willing to avoid propounding conditions unnecessarily irritating.

Probably the most prudent thing for France to do would be to accept anything like

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reasonable terms of peace at once—for every day's delay in the departure of the German troops from the country, retards most seriously the beginning of the recovery from the misfortunes military, political, and financial, which are exhausting the springs of life. It is nevertheless very probable that the Assembly, or the Government it appoints, will make a solemn official appeal to Europe for its mediation. They may also ground a special appeal to Europe on the plea that the people of the Provinces to be ceded, ought to have a voice in the matter. In fact they have much to say to Europe, to which it will be difficult to make an answer. Bismarck, however, seems to be ready to snap his fingers at Europe.

Chaudordy naturally declines as far as possible the responsibility of talking or taking any measures, as he is now the servant of a Government, whose existence will probably end in a few days. Privately he urges strongly, with a view to public opinion in France, that England should be very prompt in recognizing officially the Government appointed by the Assembly. In this I think he is right.

Prudent men (Thiers included) appear to think that at all events as a temporary measure, a moderate republic, as the form of Government least likely to produce dissension should be adopted. Indeed, of the various pretenders, no one I suppose would wish to be in any way responsible for such a peace as must be concluded. Some people indeed apprehend that the Assembly may be too conservative, or as it is called, reactionary, but I don't think this need give any one but the Rouges the least uneasiness.

The appearance now is that Gambetta will not go beyond legal opposition, and that he will content himself with putting himself at the head of the ultra-democratic and "*guerre-à-outrance*"[313] party in the Assembly. In fact there is no symptom that an attempt to set himself up, by the aid of the mob in the great towns, in opposition to the Assembly would have any success. He is not himself by character inclined to such courses, but he has people about him who are.

Jules Favre is fiercely attacked first for having concluded an armistice which did not

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comprehend the Army of the East, and secondly for not having mentioned this exception when he announced the armistice to the Delegation here. This last proceeding (which I attribute to his want of business-like habits), is of course utterly indefensible. It may however have been rather convenient than otherwise to Gambetta, as it enables him to attribute to this cause the flight into Switzerland, which I suppose, the Army of the East must at all events have been driven to. The attack against him for not surrendering Paris at discretion, and stipulating nothing for the Provinces, seems to me to be more unfair--for

[313] War to the extreme.

what would the Provinces have said if he had let loose upon them the forces, which after the occupation of the forts might have been spared from the German Army round Paris.

Barring accidents, there seems reason to hope that we shall tide over the time to the meeting of the Assembly next week, pretty quietly.

At all events the suspension of the bloodshed and other horrors is a relief which I feel every moment. Four Prussian shells fell into the small convent near the Val de Grace at Paris in which I have a niece—but providentially neither she nor any of her fellow nuns were hurt.

The elections to the new National Assembly took place on February 8, all political groups participating, and resulted more or less in accordance with general expectation. In Paris, where there were many abstentions, extreme men like Louis Blanc,[314] Victor Hugo, Gambetta and Rochefort were returned, and the example of Paris was to some extent followed by the big towns, but the general tone of the Assembly proved to be conservative, and almost reactionary, the sole question submitted to the candidates having been that of Peace or War. In effect, the feeling apparently predominant in the minds of the majority of the electors was aversion from the Government of National

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Defence, a feeling naturally accentuated by the recent crushing disasters, and the result was to throw discredit upon the Republican system of Government with which the Ministers were identified. But although the Assembly was in reality anti-Republican it was not the opinion of experienced politicians that it would be advisable to proclaim a monarchy; still less, that any one of the rival dynasties should be called immediately to the throne. On the contrary, they considered that a republic, moderate in its principles, and perhaps tacitly understood to be only temporary, would best promote union for the present, and that under such a form of Government it might be easier to obtain a ratification of such a peace as appeared to be possible, and to carry the painful measures necessary to give effect to it. It was also thought that if a monarchy were to be established it would have a better chance of enduring if the dynasty postponed its accession until the wounds from which the country was suffering should begin to heal, and that the all-important choice of a sovereign should be postponed to a calmer period. So far as could be judged, if a dynasty were decided upon at all, the chances appeared to be in favour of the House of Orleans, but there were nevertheless, amongst the members returned, between one hundred and fifty to two hundred Legitimist supporters of the Comte de Chambord, and not a few Bonapartists.

As for the all-important question of peace or war which the Assembly was to be called upon to decide, it was evident that the majority of the electors, in voting against the existing Government, intended to vote at the same time for peace, and therefore the majority of the members entered it with pacific intentions; but they were not

[314] Louis Jean Joseph Charles Blanc (29 October 1811 – 6 December 1882) was a French socialist politician, journalist and historian. He called for the creation of cooperatives in order to guarantee employment for the urban poor.

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prepared to vote for peace at any price, and although conditions which would have been scouted two months earlier were now considered to be worthy of discussion, the exaction of immoderate and humiliating demands might again arouse the spirit of desperate resistance, especially when argued under the excitement produced by heated parliamentary debates.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Bordeaux, Feb. 10, 1871.

Thiers, Dufaure,[315] and Grévy are likely, so far as one can judge, without knowing the result of the Paris elections, to take the lead in the National Assembly. Grévy is avowedly a moderate Republican, and the two others are for a moderate Republic, as a transitional government to prepare the way for a Constitutional Monarchy. Such, at least, are certainly Thiers's views, but I am speaking rather without book about Dufaure.

What I am most afraid of is that Bismarck's conditions may be so hard as to turn the really pacific Assembly into a war *à outrance* one. The war could not in all probability go on long, but it might give us three months more of bloodshed, destruction and misery, and add to the difficulty of establishing eventually a good government here. An Assembly elected two months ago would have been very different from the present one, supposing one could have been elected at all; but, two months ago, Gambetta would have been strong enough to reject the armistice and refuse to convoke the Assembly. His entourage had even now prepared warrants for arrest of his colleagues, with a view to his assuming the Dictatorship and going on with the war without an Assembly, but he is wiser and less wicked than they. He will probably make a vigorous leader of the violent Republican opposition in the Assembly.

Of course under present circumstances I have nothing to do but to stay here, as it will be for the present the seat of government. It will be a comfort to have a whole real government, and not half a one, to deal with.

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Chaudordy has at last come round to the opinion that a plenipotentiary should be named to the Conference, simply to speak for France on the Black Sea question, without any *arrière pensée*[316] about bringing in other matters. He said he would telegraph as well as he could *en clair*[317] to let Jules Favre know this. Bismarck will not let telegrams in cypher through, and there are no more pigeons.

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[315] Jules Armand Stanislas Dufaure (4 December 1798 – 28 June 1881) was a French statesman who served three non-consecutive terms as Prime Minister of France. In 1871, he became a member of the Assembly, and proposed Adolphe Thiers as President of the Republic. Dufaure became the minister of justice as chief of the party of the "left-centre" and his tenure of office was distinguished by the passage of the jury-law. In 1873, he fell with Thiers, but in 1875 resumed his former post under Louis Buffet, whom he succeeded on 9 March 1876. He was Prime Minister from 19 February 1871 – 24 May 1873 then from 23 February 1876 – 12 December 1876, and finally from 13 December 1877 – 4 February 1879.
[316] Ulterior motive.
[317] In clear language, not encrypted.

> What the French are craving for is some open, patent sympathy and support from us. They would give us comparatively little thanks for taking unostentatious steps in their favour with the Germans, though such steps were much better calculated to obtain something for them.

The extreme desirability of showing some evident sign of sympathy with France was impressed upon Her Majesty's Government who were urged to lose no time in doing so, with a view to the future relations between the two countries. The French, who certainty are not less prone than other nations in seeking to attribute a large share of their misfortunes to the shortcomings of other people, were inclined to put the blame of their calamities and disasters as much as possible, upon the Neutral Powers, who had not interfered actively in their defence; and England, who had certainly exerted herself more than any other Power in seeking practical means for making peace attainable, was very unjustly singled out for peculiar obloquy. This feeling had arisen partly because the long alliance between the two countries had made the French expect more from England than from others; partly because other Powers had ingeniously represented that their own inertness had been caused by the unwillingness of England to come forward, and had also, on various occasions, put England forward as the leading Power among

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the Neutrals, in order to give her the greatest share of the unpopularity which accompanies neutrality. French feeling was, therefore, at the time highly irritable on the subject of England, and it was suggested that a good impression would be created if Her Majesty's Government would be very prompt in recognizing whatever Government were adopted by the new Assembly, even if it did not assume a permanent character. Another suggestion was, that if the terms offered by the Germans appeared unendurably hard, the French might make an appeal to the rest of Europe; that appeal would probably take the form of a request for the mediation of the Great Neutral Powers, or for the assembling of an European Congress, and an immediate compliance on the part of England with either of these requests would go far towards re-establishing good feeling. Even if Germany rejected all intervention, this would not affect the impression made by the action of England in responding to the appeal of France, and although more could probably be obtained by the exercise of quiet and unostentatious influence upon Germany, yet nothing that might be obtained in that way would have anything like the same value in the eyes of France as an open declaration of sympathy with her and an avowed advocacy of her cause, even if no practical result followed. In short, what was required, at that particular moment, was a policy of sympathetic gush.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Bordeaux, Feb. 16, 1870.

> Your telegrams announcing that you have adjourned the Conference, and that I may

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> recognize the new Government immediately have been a great satisfaction to me. I hope we shall bring French feeling round to its old cordial state, if we can give them a little patent sympathy in their misfortunes. The Commercial Treaty will be a trouble hereafter,

but it was in great danger even before the fall of the Empire, and I hope will be let remain quiet until the time approaches for giving the notice next February.

I had a confidential conversation with Thiers last night. He seems to have taken already *de facto* the direction of affairs, and will probably be given it *de jure*[318] by the Assembly to-morrow. He is very anxious to keep the three fractions of the Chamber who are for order at home and for a reasonable policy about peace together, in order to resist the Reds. He means therefore to take moderate Republicans, Legitimists and Orleanists into his Ministry. Jules Favre is to be his Minister for Foreign Affairs, and there will of course be moderate Orleanists and Legitimists. If Thiers can succeed in getting the united support of Orleanists, Legitimists, and moderate Republicans, he expects to have a working majority of nearly three-quarters of the Assembly. I suppose his difficulty will arise from the impatience of the Orleanists, who are believed to have nearly half the seats in the

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Assembly, and who are impatient and hungry after their long deprivation of the sweets of power.

Thiers told me that he should take great pains to select men of station and ability for his diplomatic appointments. In furtherance of his policy of conciliating all parties, he supports M. Grévy, a moderate Republican, for the Presidency of the Assembly.

I like Jules Favre and have a good opinion of his character, but I don't think that he has hitherto shown himself to be skilful as a diplomatist or a negotiator. Thiers says however that he now gets on extremely well with Bismarck. There is however a very general opinion that Thiers means to go himself to Versailles to negotiate the Peace. He did not give me to understand that he intended to do so, and there are serious inconveniences in the head of the Government's being away from the Assembly and the centre of affairs, to say nothing of the ordinary objections to the chief of a Government conducting negotiations in his own person.

The feeling in the Assembly yesterday when Alsace and Lorraine were mentioned was strong and universal, and gives reason to doubt whether they will even now be brought to vote a cession of territory. In that case I suppose the only remedy would be a plébiscite, if a cession of territory is absolutely insisted upon. The Assembly might refer the question to the people, and I suppose that, in their present mood, the great majority of the population voting secretly, would vote Peace and not War, and that the vote might be taken in a very short time. I don't know however what the Germans would say to the notion, and I don't think such a plan of throwing off the responsibility worthy of the Assembly, or a happy precedent for Parliamentary Government.

Of what Thiers means to do respecting the definitive government of the country, he gave me no hint. His present policy is to try and get France out of her present straits by the united help of all the reasonable parties, and not to give any indication as to the future which might have the effect of alienating any of them.

[318] In law.

As had been expected, Thiers proceeded himself to Versailles to negotiate the Peace preliminaries. He was obviously the person best fitted to do so, for he was at once the most moderate and capable amongst Frenchmen, the least unwilling to make terms in conformity with the exigencies of the situation, and the only man in a position to carry his way in the Assembly.

On February 26, the preliminaries of Peace were signed and contained even harsher conditions than had been anticipated, but the military position of France was so absolutely hopeless that resistance to them was impracticable. The war indemnity was reduced from six milliards[319] to five, but this constituted the sole success of

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the French negotiators, unless the formal entry of the German troops into Paris might be taken as a somewhat barren substitute for the restoration of Belfort; certain matters of detail, chiefly connected with finance, were postponed for future consideration at Frankfort.

In view of what has already been written respecting the secret negotiations which took place during the campaign, it is impossible not to be struck with the heroic folly displayed by the French in the latter stages of the war. If it is true that their gallant struggle under the stimulus of Gambetta and the Government of National Defence inspired the admiration of the world, it is equally obvious that human life and treasure were ruthlessly wasted in a hopeless cause. Bismarck, it is well known, was strongly opposed to any accession of territory, beyond what was absolutely necessary, and would have much preferred a pecuniary compensation. If, instead of following the lead of Gambetta, the counsels of Thiers had been adopted, peace would have been made long before the fall of Paris became imminent; millions of money would have been saved, thousands of lives would not have been uselessly sacrificed, and Lorraine would have remained French instead of becoming the chief contributory cause towards undying hatred of the German people.

Thiers returned to Bordeaux upon the accomplishment of his melancholy mission, and a debate took place in the Assembly on the question of the ratification of the Peace preliminaries. The discussion gave opportunity for much recrimination and for much display of emotion, especially on the part of Victor Hugo, but Thiers's success was a foregone conclusion and the Peace preliminaries were accepted by 546 votes to 107.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Bordeaux, March 2, 1871.

> I suppose we may say peace at last. I hear that the discoveries made by the Committees on the Military Forces and on the Finances were so overwhelming, as to convince every member that defence was absolutely impossible. This reduced the debate yesterday to mere idle vapouring on the part of the Opposition. One speech was simply absurd—that of Victor Hugo. The rest were perhaps fair speeches, but there was no eloquence worthy of the occasion, and there was an evident unreality about the Opposition. The majority had determined not to speak. Thiers's few words were very telling; no one but Thiers could have got so many to vote; the fear was that a great number would abstain from voting, and

[319] A milliard is a thousand million often referred to as a billion, which is ten to the power of 9. (10^{9})

so the Ratification would either not be carried at all, or be carried by too small a majority to pledge the country.

Chaudordy did not vote, he hankered to the last after an appeal to the Neutral Powers. Even supposing the Germans would have given time by prolonging the Armistice, which they certainly would not, I don't think France would have gained anything by the appeal. Either Bismarck would have peremptorily refused to let the Neutrals have anything to say; or, if, *par impossible*, he had made some concessions, he would in return of course have required them to acquiesce explicitly in his other terms; and this, I think, would have been as bad for France, and worse for the dignity of the Neutrals themselves, than the present state of things. At least we are free from any sort of sign of approval of the monstrous conditions Prussia has imposed by sheer force.

How France is to be governed, and how the milliards are to be paid, are hard questions. The majority of the Assembly, which is decidedly anti-republican, hardly expects to establish a Government to its taste, without some actual fighting with the Reds in Paris and other large towns. It therefore does not

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like at all the idea of moving the Assembly to Paris. Thiers, I think, wishes to go to Paris, or at least to move the Assembly to some place near enough to enable the Executive Government to be carried on in Paris. The inconveniences of the present roving system are manifold; and I cannot help thinking that the sooner the Government settles in the Capital, and has its fight (if fight there really must be) with the Mob over, the better.

As to what the New Government is to be, there would, with the present Assembly in its present mood, be, one would think, little difficulty in getting a large majority for a Monarchy, if the fusion between the Legitimists and the Orleanists were once decidedly and irrevocably made, and I suppose the Moderate Republicans would not hold aloof from such a Government, provided it was *bonâ fide*[320] parliamentary. Thiers, I believe, still thinks that for the present a Moderate Republic is the best compromise between all opinions, and the form of Government which least disunites Frenchmen. He has now immense influence, but the claimants of the throne and their supporters in the Assembly seem to be already impatient; and Thiers will have nothing but painful measures to bring forward, and will be accused of desiring to perpetuate his own power.

I am afraid our Commercial Treaty is in the greatest danger. With Thiers as head of the Government and as Minister of Finance, and the popular feeling hostile to free trade and not in good humour with England, it will be strange if we hold our own about the Treaty, or a liberal tariff in France. It was indeed very doubtful whether the Treaty could be maintained even under the Constitutional Empire.

Grant's Message has for the moment turned the wrath of the French from the Neutrals to the Americans. It is strange that the Americans, who are so abominably thin skinned themselves, never show the least consideration for the national feelings of other Peoples.

[320] Sincere or authentic.

The French are, of course, peculiarly sensitive at this moment, and prone to resent anything like a demonstration of disregard for them. I am truly thankful that you stopped Walker's entering Paris with the Germans.

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I have not been able to speak to Thiers since he came back, but I am going to present my letters of Credence to him this evening.

The harshness of the peace conditions shocked Lord Granville, who thought them not only intolerable to France, but a dangerous menace to the sacred idol of free trade.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons
Foreign Office, March 1, 1871.

Vae Victis[321] indeed! How hard the conquerors have been, and what a mistake in a great country like Germany to give up all direction of its affairs to one bold unscrupulous man!

We do not believe in France being able to bear the burden which has been put upon her.

I presume one of the results will be to put protectionist duties on all imported articles. I do not think we should complain much. We shall lose to a certain degree, but infinitesimally as compared with France. You had better, in conversation with Thiers, and others, say that you shall regret it on French account. They want money, which is to be chiefly got in England. Here, rightly or wrongly, we believe that protective duties are most injurious to the revenue to which money-lenders look for their interest. If it is known that Thiers means to go in for large armaments and for protection, self-interest will shut up the hoards here.

Peace having now at length been assured, there arose the question of where the new Assembly was to establish itself, and as there was an only too well-founded suspicion that Paris was no place for a conservative chamber with a hankering after a monarchy, Versailles was eventually selected.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Bordeaux, March 6, 1871.

Thiers asked me yesterday whether I thought it would be advisable for him to bring the state of affairs between France and Germany before the Conference in London.

I did not very well see what there was to submit to the Conference, as the preliminaries of peace were signed and could not be altered. I thought it however better to avoid any discussion on this point, and to say decidedly that in my opinion it would be very unadvisable to do anything of the kind. I told him that I thought it would be a particularly bad opportunity to take, if he wished to consult the European Powers; that the German Plenipotentiary would say, and say with reason, that his Government had entered into a Conference for a specific purpose and was not to be entrapped into an extraneous

[321] Woe to the vanquished.

discussion, that in this view he would no doubt be strongly supported by the Russian, and that probably none of the Plenipotentiaries would approve of a proceeding, which would certainly retard the business for which the Conference had met, and might very likely break it off altogether.

I think Thiers rather asked my opinion pour "*l'acquit de sa conscience*,"[322] than from having himself any strong desire to attempt to bring his affairs before the Conference. At any rate he gave a very conclusive argument against doing so himself, for he said that it might have the effect of delaying the Prussian evacuation of the neighbourhood of Paris.

He hopes to get the half milliard necessary to get the Prussians out of the forts on the North side of the Seine, before the end of the month. He speaks altogether more hopefully of the financial prospects than any one else whom I have heard. He says Bismarck was extremely hard about the money, and that the negotiation was nearly broken off altogether on the question of Belfort. On this question he believes Bismarck was with him, and had a tremendous fight to obtain leave from the Emperor and

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Moltke to make the concession. Strange as it may appear Thiers seems really to have a sort of liking for Bismarck personally, and to believe that if he had been let have his own way by the *militaires*, he would have been much kinder to France.

It has been generally supposed that the Assembly will adjourn to Versailles, and St. Germain has also been mentioned; but Thiers told me yesterday that he should himself propose Fontainebleau. He would like himself to take it to Paris, as soon as the Prussians are out of the forts, but the majority will not hear of putting themselves so near the Belleville mob. I think it will be a great mistake not to go to Paris, and I hope Thiers will pluck up a spirit, and carry his point. He said something about being glad to have me near him at Fontainebleau, but I do not know that it was more than a compliment. At any rate I am myself strongly of opinion that the best thing for me to do is to go to Paris as soon as possible, and re-establish the Embassy there on the normal footing. If there should be (which I doubt) any necessity for my going to Thiers or Fontainebleau or elsewhere for more than a few hours at a time I should still propose to have the headquarters of the Embassy in the Faubourg St. Honoré and to treat my own occasional absence as accidental. In fact to act as I did when invited to Compiègne in the Emperor's time. I hope to be in Paris by the end of this week, or at latest, the beginning of next.

The Ambassador and his staff returned to Paris on March 14, finding the Embassy quite uninjured, no traces of the siege in the neighbourhood, and the town merely looking a little duller than usual. They were enchanted to be back, and little suspected that in three or four days they would again be driven out.

Previous attempts on the part of the Red Republicans to overthrow the Government of National Defence during the siege had met with failure, but Favre's stipulation that the National Guards should be permitted to retain their arms

[322] To set his mind at rest.

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gave the Revolutionary Party its opportunity. The new Government was obviously afraid to act, and matters came to a crisis when an ineffectual and half-hearted attempt was made to remove some guns which had been seized by National Guards. Regular troops brought up against the latter refused to fight and fraternized with their opponents; two generals were shot under circumstances of great brutality, a Revolutionary Central Committee took possession of the Hotel de Ville and proclaimed the Commune, and the Government withdrew such regular troops as remained faithful to Versailles. On March 18, the insurgents were completely masters of the right bank of the Seine, and on the following day an emissary from the French Foreign Office appeared at the Embassy with the information that the Government had been forced to retire to Versailles, and that as it was no longer able to protect the Diplomatic Body at Paris, it was hoped that the Representatives of Foreign Powers would also repair to Versailles with the least possible delay. Nearly all of these did so at once, but Lord Lyons with his pronounced sedentary tastes had had quite enough of moving about and decided to wait for instructions.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 20, 1871.

> We are in a strange state indeed. How it will end, who shall say. The Prussians may be glad of a chance to wipe away the absurdity of their three days' occupation by a more serious entrance, and it may suit their rulers to put down Belleville, with a view to checking the progress of Republicanism. I should think however it would be wiser of them with their hatred of France, to leave the Parisians to accomplish their own ruin.

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> A good many National Guards have gone out towards Versailles, whether with the view of making a serious attack on the Government and the Assembly remains to be seen. It seems to be doubtful whether there are *any* troops, except perhaps the Papal Zouaves[323] on whom the Government can depend.
>
> The proclamations of the Central Committee in the *Journal Officiel*, which I send you officially, are worth reading. They seem to me to be in form much more calm, dignified and sensible than the proclamations of the Government of National Defence used to be. In substance they are not specimens of political knowledge and wisdom.
>
> It is to be hoped that the Assembly will not make matters worse by violent and ill-considered resolutions. I suppose it will be furious with Thiers for having brought it to Versailles, and it is on the cards that it may be really attacked there to-day by the Parisians. Any way, I should not be at all surprised if the Assembly transferred itself to some dismal French provincial town.

[323] The Papal Zouaves were an infantry battalion (later regiment) dedicated to defending the Papal States. Named after the French zouave regiments, the Zuavi Pontifici were mainly young men, unmarried and Catholic, who volunteered to assist Pope Pius IX in his struggle against the Italian unificationist Risorgimento.

Instructions, however, were shortly received to proceed to Versailles, and he betook himself there on the 21st, taking with him Wodehouse and Sheffield, and leaving Malet, Colonel Claremont, Lascelles,[324] and Saumarez[325] at the Embassy.

At Versailles complete ignorance appeared to prevail as to the actual situation; Jules Favre knew nothing, and either the Government had no plan or was not prepared to disclose it; but, as, at all events, during the early stage of the conflict, railway communication with Versailles was not interrupted, it was possible to come up to Paris occasionally at the risk of being seized by the Communists as a spy, and see how matters were progressing.

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Thiers, in the early days of the Civil War affected to believe that the revolt would speedily be brought to a satisfactory termination, and the knowledge that he personally was largely responsible for the existing situation doubtless prompted him to minimise the danger as much as possible. By withdrawing the regular troops to Versailles, he had left the well-disposed inhabitants of Paris at the mercy of an armed revolutionary mob, and if a renewed bombardment or fresh Prussian occupation of the town was the result, the fault would have been largely his. The Assembly too found itself in a ridiculous position; it had been brought to Versailles because it had been represented that the Administration could not be carried on away from the capital, and no sooner did it arrive at Versailles than the whole Government was driven out of Paris.

The optimism with which Thiers viewed the progress of events in Paris was not shared by onlookers at Versailles. They could not help seeing that the members of the Central Committee were continually gaining ground, and had now obtained control of the whole or very nearly the whole of the city: that the slaughter of the "Men of Order" in the Rue de la Paix on March 22, had left the Red Republicans the masters of the day, and that the communal elections on March 26, had given a semblance of regular authority to the revolutionaries. Thiers, who had taken the whole management of the affair into his own hands, and was still unwilling to use force, now endeavoured to conciliate the Communists by a proclamation conceding complete recognition of the municipal franchise, the right to elect all officers of the National Guard, including the Commander-in-Chief; a modification of the law on the

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maturity of bills of exchange, and a prohibition to house owners and lodging-house keepers to give their lodgers notice to quit. These concessions to blackmail were, however, considered insufficient by the implacable revolutionary leaders, and negotiations broke down when it was demanded that the Communal Council should supersede the Assembly whenever the two bodies might come into collision, and that the control of finance should be vested in the former. It was evident that civil

[324] Now Sir Frank Lascelles, G.C.B. (LN). Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles GCB GCMG GCVO PC (23 March 1841 – 2 January 1920) was a British diplomat. He served as Ambassador to both Russia and Germany. He was the fifth son of William Lascelles, himself the third son of Henry Lascelles, 2nd Earl of Harewood.
[325] Now Lord de Saumarez. (LN). James St Vincent Saumarez, 4th Baron de Saumarez (17 July 1843 – 25 April 1937), was a British diplomat and peer, for some forty-five years a member of the House of Lords. His overseas postings were to Paris (1868), Berlin (1872), Athens (1873), Japan (1875), Paris and Rome (1880), and Brussels (1881). While in Paris in 1871, he was witness to the Commune rioting.

war could no longer be avoided, and in view of the doubts which existed respecting the reliability of the army at Versailles, the gravest apprehensions were felt as to the result of the struggle. Lord Granville was convinced that the Prussians would re-enter Paris and restore the Empire, although the Emperor, while praising the Prussians in the course of a conversation with the Duke of Cambridge,[326] had recently stated that no one could remain in France who was brought there by the enemy.

On March 28, the Commune was proclaimed with much pomp and emblematic ceremony in which Phrygian caps[327] were conspicuous, and a series of decrees appeared shortly in the *Journal Officiel,* which announced the abolition of conscription, but the compulsory enrolment of all able-bodied men in the National Guard; a remission of lodger's rents; the suspension of the sale of all articles deposited in pawn; and the supersession of the Government at Versailles. A vast number of persons quitted the city before the end of the month, and of those who remained, there were probably many, who, apart from their political sentiments, heartily welcomed so convenient a release from embarrassing liabilities.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Versailles, March 30, 1871.

> The Commune are going ahead in Paris. The great comfort the Government and the Assembly here have, is that the similar movements in other great towns have failed, and that thus it is plainly Paris against all France. Their great hope appears to be that the members of the Commune will quarrel among themselves, and that their social measures may be so thoroughly socialist, as to rouse resistance among the Parisians. In the meantime however the delay seems dangerous; the working classes are said to be going over more and more completely to the Commune, and the effect of a completely successful revolution in Paris on the other towns may yet be serious. Bismarck is said to have given Thiers a limited time (a fortnight or three weeks) to set things straight, and to have declared that, when that time is up, the Germans must step in.

As a matter of fact, the conduct of the Germans does not seem to have left anything to be desired. They allowed the numbers of the French troops, which had been fixed under the armistice at 40,000, to be indefinitely increased: they gave facilities for the return of the prisoners in Germany,

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[326] Prince George, Duke of Cambridge (George William Frederick Charles; 26 March 1819 – 17 March 1904) was a member of the British royal family, a grandson of King George III and cousin of Queen Victoria. The Duke was an army officer by profession and served as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces (military head of the British Army) from 1856 to 1895. He became Duke of Cambridge in 1850 and field marshal in 1862. Deeply devoted to the old Army, he worked with Queen Victoria to defeat or minimise every reform proposal, such as setting up a general staff. His Army's weaknesses were dramatically revealed by the poor organisation at the start of the Second Boer War.

[327] Phrygian cap, soft felt or wool conical headdress fitting closely around the head and characterized by a pointed crown that curls forward. It originated in the ancient country of Phrygia in Anatolia and is represented in ancient Greek art as the type of headdress worn not only by Phrygians but by all inhabitants of Anatolia and of nations farther east. The Phrygian cap became an emblem of liberty during the French Revolution (1787–99). It was adopted by the revolutionaries as "the red cap of liberty" and continues to be associated with the national allegorical figure of *Liberté*.

and even gave the French Government to understand that the assistance of German troops might be counted upon if necessary. Tact is not generally supposed to be a marked German characteristic, but Thiers admitted to Lord Lyons that the "offer had been made with so much tact and delicacy, that, while of course it could not be accepted, the Government had been able to pass it by, without appearing to understand it."

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In the meanwhile, in spite of much dissatisfaction, Thiers was determined not to be hurried, and both he and Jules Favre declined to believe either that there was any danger of excesses being committed at Paris, or that the Commune was gaining strength in consequence of the delay. These opinions were not in the least shared by the public at large; the general impression being that each day's delay added to the strength of the Commune, discouraged the party of order and increased the exasperation of that party against the Government and the National Assembly; it was believed too that if excesses were committed they would inspire the well-disposed citizens with terror rather than with a spirit of resistance.

Fortunately for the cause of order, the Communists soon afforded an opportunity for testing the temper of the Versailles troops. On April 2, the National Guards came into collision with the regulars at Courbevoic, were heavily worsted, and such prisoners as were taken were summarily shot. The engagement showed that the army could be depended upon, and that there need be no further fears with regard to a policy of resolute repression; nevertheless there was little sign on the part of Thiers of following up the success that had been gained, and he made the remarkable excuse that the military ignorance of the insurgents and the eccentricity of their movements rendered military operations against them correspondingly difficult. Little progress had been made towards the end of April, although righteous retribution had overtaken Thiers in the invasion of his house in the Place St. Georges, and in the violation by National Guards of the sanctity of the apartment of his mother-in-law.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Versailles, April 21, 1871.

> I suppose we shall get back to Paris, or to the ruins of it, some day; and certainly the affairs of the Commune are looking more gloomy than they did, but I must leave to Thiers the responsibility of the perpetually renewed declaration that we shall be there in a few days. The sooner it comes the better, for the delay is very dangerous for Thiers himself and for the country. The great towns in the south will hardly be kept under if Paris remains in rebellion much longer, and Thiers will find it very difficult to hold back the monarchical majority in the Assembly.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Versailles, April 25, 1871.

> I don't hear any guns, but I suppose after what Thiers said to me last night, that the grand attack upon Fort Issy is going on. I shall go or send to some safe point of view, as soon as I get the Messenger off.

It was high time to begin, for the apparent weakness of the Government is producing lamentable effects. Colonel Playfair's[328] reports of the spread of a very serious insurrection in Algeria are confirmed by recent telegrams, and there is said to be rather an alarming movement in Savoy, not with a view to reunion with Italy, but rather to a junction with Switzerland.

I do not trouble you with any of the programmes for the attack on Paris which are in everybody's mouth here. The favourite notion is that, with or without getting their half milliard, the Germans are to give up the forts, or all of them except St. Denis, to the French; who are then either to attack Paris on the north, or to complete the investment of it. Military big-wigs say that Thiers has not men enough to carry out such a plan. Financial authorities say that he has no chance of obtaining the money till he is

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already master of Paris; and Jules Favre says positively that Paris will not be bombarded or blockaded. The value to be given to this affirmation of Jules Favre cannot go beyond there being no *present* intentions to make a regular general bombardment or to reduce the place by famine. I urge him and Thiers to give warning in time to enable foreigners to withdraw, but I doubt the foreigners getting any warning beyond that which Malet has given already, and I doubt the English being persuaded to go; but I shall do all I can about it.

The bombardment, in spite of Jules Favre's assurance, took place shortly, and did infinitely more harm than that of the Germans. Amongst other buildings which suffered was the Embassy, but until the closing days of the struggle in May, those members of the staff who had been left there, appear to have suffered no inconvenience; and the relations of Malet with the self-constituted officials of the Commune were perfectly amicable, as far as can be judged. Malet, whose management of a trying situation was marked by much good sense and tact, found no difficulty in getting on with Paschal Grousset,[329] the *Délègué aux Affaires Etrangères*[330] (also described by his adversaries as *Etranger aux Affaires*), and his relations with this important personage were no doubt greatly facilitated by a brother who acted as private secretary: "a very pleasant little fellow, willing to put his brother's signature to anything." Paschal Grousset had good reason to congratulate himself subsequently upon the pains which he had taken to ensure the safety of foreigners in Paris and for the friendly disposition which he had shown. When the Versailles troops obtained possession of the city, he was captured and would in all probability have been

[328] Sir (Robert) Lambert Playfair KCMG (21 March 1828 – 18 February 1899) was a British soldier, diplomat, naturalist and author. He had a military career in India and was promoted to Major in 1866, and left the army with the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1867. He was assistant Political Agent at Aden 1854–62, then Political Agent, then Consul, at Zanzibar 1862–67, and was appointed Consul-General in Algeria in 1867. His territory was extended to Algeria and Tunis in 1885.

[329] François Paschal Grousset (7 April 1844 – 9 April 1909) was a French politician, journalist, translator and science fiction writer.

[330] Minister delegate for Foreign Affairs. (Officially a rank below minister.)

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shot in company with other Communist leaders if unofficial representations in his favour had not been made by Lord Lyons. He was transported, but subsequently returned to Paris under an amnesty, and, years after, was the cause of a comic incident at the house of a lady formerly connected with the British Embassy. This lady, hearing a terrific uproar in her anteroom, came out to see what was the matter and found Paschal Grousset engaged in a violent altercation with her *maître d'hôtel.* It turned out that the latter, who was an ex-gendarme, had been in charge of Paschal Grousset when the latter was seized by the Versailles Government, and that he now strongly resented his former prisoner appearing in the character of an ordinary visitor.

One of the most abominable acts of the Commune had been the seizure of the Archbishop of Paris, together with a number of priests, and the holding of them as hostages for the good treatment of Communist prisoners. No secret was made of the fact that under certain circumstances they would be shot, and efforts were set on foot by various parties—the American Minister, the British Government, and the German authorities—to prevent so horrible a catastrophe. The intervention of the American Minister, Mr. Washburne,[331] only caused irritation. "They are very angry here with Mr. Washburne," wrote Lord Lyons on April 28, "for interfering about the Archbishop, and they are still more displeased with him for being so much in Paris. In fact, although he has a room here he is much more in Paris than at Versailles. Thiers observed to me last night that my American colleague had a *conduite très singulière*.[332] They would not stand this in a European representative, but they allow a great latitude to the American,

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partly because he and his Government have nothing to say to European politics, and partly because they cannot well help it." An attempt made by direction of Lord Granville met with no better success, for the Versailles Government firmly refused to make the exchange of the revolutionary leader Blanqui,[333] asked for by the Commune, and would only go so far as to promise in private, that the latter's life should be spared under certain circumstances.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville._
Versailles, May 16, 1871.

> The poor Archbishop has been constantly in my thoughts, both before I received your letter of the 13th and since. The state of the case is simply this. The Commune will not release him on any other terms than the release of Blanqui; and the Government positively refuses

[331] Elihu Benjamin Washburne (September 23, 1816 – October 22, 1887) was an American politician who served as a congressman from Illinois before, during and after the American Civil War. Washburne was the 25th United States Secretary of State briefly in 1869, and was the United States Minister to France from 1869 to 1877.
[332] Strange or peculiar behaviour.
[333] Louis Auguste Blanqui (8 February 1805 – 1 January 1881) was a French socialist, political philosopher and political activist. On 17 March, Adolphe Thiers, aware of the threat represented by Blanqui had him arrested. A few days afterwards the insurrection which established the Paris Commune broke out, and Blanqui was elected president of the insurgent commune. The Communards offered to release all of their prisoners if the Thiers government released Blanqui, but their offer was met with refusal. He was subsequently condemned to transportation but this was commuted to imprisonment because of his health.

to give up Blanqui. Every one agrees that intervention with the Commune is worse than useless; in fact does harm. You will see from my Confidential Despatch of to-day, that I have gone as far as possible with Thiers on the subject, but without success. I cannot hope that I have done any good, but I have certainly done no harm. Thiers spoke to me freely and confidentially, but absolutely refused (or rather said positively that it was impossible) to give up Blanqui. I perhaps went rather far in speaking to M. Thiers even in the way I did, but I think it will be a comfort to remember that we did all that could be done.

I understand that the Archbishop does not suffer any positive hardship or privation beyond being kept a close prisoner, but I fear his health is giving way in some degree under the pressure of anxiety and confinement.

Perhaps the most painful feature in the whole matter has been the conduct of the Vicar General, the Abbé Lagarde,[334] who was sent to Versailles on parole to negotiate the release of the Archbishop. Notwithstanding the entreaties of the Archbishop himself, and the exhortations of everyone here, he

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declined to redeem his promise and has thereby materially injured the Archbishop's position, and given force to the Communist pretext that no trust can be put in priests. I am afraid he is still out of Paris.

Jules Favre was also approached on the subject, but nothing could be got out of him, and the only chance of success seemed to depend upon a peremptory demand of the Germans for his release, the Commune being completely at their mercy. This action the German authorities found themselves unable to take, and in spite of the frequently expressed opinions of Thiers and others that the lives of the hostages were in no real danger, they were all massacred in cold blood during the final days of the street fighting.

By the middle of May, most people were of opinion that there was nothing to prevent the troops entering Paris whenever they pleased, and that the sooner they did so, the less resistance they would encounter. Thiers, however, still refused to run any risks, and it was not until nearly the close of the month that the insurrection was completely suppressed, amidst scenes almost unprecedented in modern times.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Versailles, May 26, 1871.

The state of Paris is heart-breaking. The night I spent there (24th) was calculated to give one an idea of the infernal regions. Fires in all directions, the air oppressive with smoke and unpleasant odours, the incessant roar of cannon and musketry and all kinds of strange sounds. For the 48 hours before my arrival, the members of the Embassy and all in the house were in imminent danger; a fire raging in the next street but one, shells falling on the

[334] Louis Étienne Anne Petitjean de Lagarde (7 April 1833 – 4 September 1884), was a French abbot, a member of the Société de Marie (Marianistes). Director of the Collège Stanislas (Paris) from 1872 to 1884.

roof which might set fire to the house at any moment, and shot flying so fast on both sides that escape in case of fire would have been hardly possible. It is a great satisfaction to me

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that every one in the house behaved well. Of the members of the Embassy I was quite sure, and all the men servants appeared to have shown pluck and alacrity in rushing to the places where the shells fell, in order to extinguish the fire in case of need. Malet has a first-rate head, and directed everything with his usual coolness and self-possession.

One bit of a shell is said to have fallen in the garden yesterday morning, but it certainly did no mischief, and there was no appearance of danger while I was there. I cannot, however, feel quite comfortable so long as the insurgents hold the Buttes de Chaumont. They must, I should hope, be on the point of being driven out at the moment I write. Little or no intelligence of what was going on in the town could be obtained. The least inconvenience on leaving one's own house was to be seized upon to form a chain to hand buckets. Sentries stopped our progress in almost every direction: arrests were frequent and summary executions the order of the day. I hope it will really all be over by to-night. Sad as it all is, I felt a satisfaction in finding myself in the old house again, and am impatient to return to it for good. I hope to do so directly I can without cutting myself off from uninterrupted communication with you.

The fate of the hostages is what makes me the most anxious now. All the accounts we do receive are hopeful, but we have no positive assurance of their being safe. The Nuncio came back from his expedition to the Crown Prince of Saxony[335] much pleased with himself for having undertaken it, and very grateful to me for having suggested it. He was referred by the Crown Prince to General Fabrice,[336] who told him, that by order of Prince Bismarck, he was doing all that could be done to save the Archbishop. He even hinted that he had tried offers of money.

Thiers is trying the patience of the Assembly by keeping in office Jules Favre, Picard and Jules Simon, who were members of the Government of National Defence and of the violent Republican opposition under the Empire. The contempt and disgust of the Parisians of every shade of opinion for the

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Government of National Defence appears unbounded. They consider it to have been a Government which had neither courage nor capacity, and was equally inefficient in defending the city against the enemy, and maintaining order and authority inside. By the

[335] Albert (23 April 1828 – 19 June 1902) was King of Saxony from 29 October 1873 until his death in 1902. Albert had a successful military career, leading Saxon troops that participated in the First Schleswig War, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-Prussian War.

[336] Georg Friedrich Alfred Graf von Fabrice (23. May 1818 - 25. March 1891) served in the Royal Saxon Military as a cavalry general and as that kingdom's Minister of War. He fought with Prussia in the Danish War of 1864 and later against the Prussians in 1866. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, General-Lieutenant von Fabrice functioned as Governor-General presiding over the XII Armee-Korps district in Versailles.

> country at large, and still more, by the monarchical representatives in the Assembly, the members of that Government, by their conduct before and after the 4th September are held to have been the cause of all the present horrors.

Notwithstanding all this, Thiers seems to rule the Assembly completely, however much the members may grumble in private. His troubles with them will begin when Paris is at last subdued.

I went to Favre with the offer of the firemen directly the telegram was decyphered. He took it up to Thiers who immediately accepted it.

The Commune, which terminated in an orgy of blood, flame, and insensate fury, had lasted for rather more than two months. Amongst those who originated the movement were some who honestly believed that they were merely advocating municipal freedom, and others who thought that the existence of the Republic was threatened by a reactionary Assembly; but the control eventually fell into the hands of revolutionaries whose aim it was to destroy the foundations of society. It showed human nature at its worst, and the ferocity of the reprisals on the part of the Government created almost as much repulsion as the outrages which had provoked them. Now, however, with the restoration of order, a new era was about to dawn; the ceaseless disasters which had overwhelmed the country since the end of July, 1870, had come to an end, and within an almost incredibly short period, France recovered that place amongst the great nations of the world, which seemed at one time to have been irretrievably lost.

END OF VOLUME. I.

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