LORD LYONS

A RECORD OF BRITISH DIPLOMACY

BY

LORD NEWTON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

ANNOTATED BY CRAIG THORNBER.

2026

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 wife Augusta Louisa Rogers. Richard Lyons had two sisters and a brother. His brother was Captain Edmund Moubray Lyons (1819 – 1855). His sister Anne Theresa Bickerton Lyons (1815 – 1894) became Baroness von Würtzburg and his 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 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 his siblings accompanied their father and mother to Valletta, Malta, in 1828. There they were educated at home in the works of enlightenment philosophy, including those of William Robertson, and in history and classical civilisation, in French and in modern Greek. After their first tour of the Aegean, Lyons' 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, explored Greece on excursions on 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 Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Lyons is known for his resolution of the *Trent Affair* during the American Civil War; his contribution to the Special Relationship and to the *Entente Cordiale*. He predicted 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 Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States from 1858 to 1865, during the American Civil War. This was the title used until 1893 when it was changed to ambassador. He was the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1865 to 1867 and then British Ambassador to France from 1867 to 1887, which was then the most prestigious office in the British Diplomatic 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 he 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. Lord Newton was well qualified to write the book having worked under Lord Lyons in Paris and having a keen interest in European affairs. By the time he wrote it, he had been a Member of Parliament and then succeeded to his father's barony in 1898, taking his seat in the House of Lords. 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. Prior to his father's death, he was known as Thomas Wodehouse Legh. It is typical of his 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, play the piano, dance and speak French. In 1884, while in Paris, she had her portrait painted by John Singer Sargent, R.A. Lord Newton remained at the embassy until 1886.

Notes on the Annotation

When the two volumes of Lord Newton's biography of Lord Lyons were published in 1913, those reading it would have been familiar with many of the people mentioned from published

accounts of the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War and the international politics of the day reported in the press. However, in 1913, the school leaving age was twelve and secondary education in Grammar Schools was not free unless a scholarship was obtained. As a result, the book would have been read by only those regarded as the middle and upper classes of society. One hundred and thirteen 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 424 footnotes. Footnotes by Lord Newton are attributed with (LN). The vast majority of the information has been taken from *Wikipedia*, a source that is generally dependable for biographical details and widely available on modern digital devices. Authoritative biographies are available from other sources for British people 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. Civil honours have been omitted for simplicity and brevity. 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 website, although it is appreciated that such information may not be accessible indefinitely. Sometimes Lord Newton mentions a man just by his surname and where this is a common surname the usual search engines produce many false hits. In these cases, artificial intelligence programmes such as *Claude* and *Google Gemini* have been employed which can cope with multiple search terms such as name, location and approximate date. This has usually produced a candidate with both Christian name and surname allowing for further confirmatory searches.

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 indicated the original page numbers. The range of pages in each chapter is shown in the footers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Eileen Monies, an organiser of volunteer guides at Lyme Park, for her expertise in the translation of passages in French that feature in letters and conversations involving Lord Lyons at the embassy in Paris. For the translation of other occasional French or Latin words and expressions I take full responsibility.

Craig Willard Thornber BSc. Ph.D. FRSC.
Macclesfield, April 2026.

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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CHAPTER X.

THE THIRD REPUBLIC. (1871-1873)

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Strictly speaking, the existence of the National Assembly which had been summoned to ratify the Preliminaries of Peace, had now, in June 1871, come to an end, but under prevailing circumstances, it was more convenient to ignore Constitutional technicalities, and the Government proceeded to carry on the business of the country on the basis of a Republic. Thiers[1] had been elected Chief of the Executive, and it was astonishing how rapidly his liking for a Republic increased since he had become the head of one. It was now part of his task to check the too reactionary tendencies of the Assembly and to preserve that form of government which was supposed to divide Frenchmen the least. The feeling against the Government of National Defence was as strong as ever, and the elections of some of the Orleans princes gave rise to inconvenient demonstrations on the part of their political supporters, who pressed for the repeal of the law disqualifying that family. Thiers

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realized plainly enough that the revival of this demand was premature, and would only add to the general confusion, and had therefore induced the princes to absent themselves from Bordeaux, but the question could no longer be avoided.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.[2]
Paris, June 6, 1871.

> Thiers has been hard at work "lobbying," as the Americans say, but could not come to any settlement with the Assembly, and so begged them to postpone the question of the elections of the Princes of Orleans till the day after to-morrow. One of the plans proposed was that the provisional state of things should be formally continued for two years, by conferring his present powers on Thiers for that period. This would, it was hoped, keep the Republicans quiet and allay the impatience of the monarchical parties, by giving them a fixed time to look forward to. But this, it seems, the majority in the Assembly would not promise to vote. On the other hand, Thiers is said to be afraid of having the Duc d'Aumale[3] and perhaps Prince Napoleon[4] also, speaking against him in the Assembly, and attacking him and each other outside.

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[1] 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.
[2] 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.
[3] Henri Eugène Philippe Louis d'Orléans Duke of Aumale (1822-1897) was a leader of the Orleanists, a political faction in 19thcentury France associated with constitutional monarchy.
[4] Napoleon III (born Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte; 1808 – 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.

> Then comes the doubt as to the extent to which the fusion between the Comte de Chambord[5] and the other Princes, or rather that between their respective parties, really goes. Altogether nothing can be less encouraging than the prospect. The Duc d'Aumale, as *Lieutenant Général du Royaume*,[6] to prepare the way for the Comte de Chambord, is, for the moment, the favourite combination. In the meantime Thiers has thrown a sop to the majority by putting an Orleanist into the Home Office. The idea at Versailles yesterday was that Thiers and the Assembly would come to a compromise on the basis that the Orleans elections should be confirmed, but with a preamble repeating that nothing done was to be held to prejudge the question of the definitive government of France.

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When the question came up, Thiers yielded on the point of the admission of the Princes, and the majority were highly pleased at having extorted this concession. Lord Lyons, dining at Thiers's house at Versailles, a few days after the debate in the Assembly, met there the German General von Fabrice,[7] the Prince de Joinville,[8] the Duc d'Aumale, and the Duc de Chartres,[9] and mentions the significant fact that M. and Madame Thiers and the rest of the company treated these Princes with even more than the usual respect shown to Royal personages. In private conversation Thiers expressed great confidence in soon getting the Germans out of the Paris forts, but both he and Jules Favre[10] complained that Bismarck[11] was a very bad creditor, and insisted upon having his first half-milliard[12] by the end of the month: in fact, the Germans were so clamorous for payment that they hardly seemed to realize how anxious the French were to get rid of them, and that if the money was not immediately forthcoming, it was only because it was impossible to produce it.

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[5] Henri, Count of Chambord and Duke of Bordeaux (1820 – 1883) was the Legitimist pretender to the throne of France as Henri V from 1844 until his death in 1883. Henri was the only son of Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berry, born after his father's death, by his wife, Princess Carolina of Naples and Sicily, daughter of King Francis I of the Two Sicilies.
[6] Lieutenant General of the Kingdom.
[7] Georg Friedrich Alfred Graf von Fabrice (1818 – 1891) was a Saxon general of the cavalry and a politician. He was Saxon Minister of War from 1866 to 1891 and from 1876 until his death Chairman of the General Ministry of the Kingdom of Saxony.
[8] François d'Orléans, Prince of Joinville, Admiral of the French Navy (1818 – 1900) was the third son of Louis Philippe, King of the French, and his wife Maria Amalia of Naples and Sicily. François' grandson Jean went on to become the Orléanist claimant to the extinct French throne, a claim passed on to his son, grandson and now great-grandson Jean, Count of Paris, current Orléanist claimant to the French crown.
[9] Prince Robert, Duke of Chartres (Robert Philippe Louis Eugène Ferdinand (1840 – 1910) was the son of Prince Ferdinand Philippe, Duke of Orléans, and thus, a grandson of King Louis-Philippe of France. He fought for the Union in the American Civil War, and then for France in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. In 1886, he was exiled from France.
[10] Jules Claude Gabriel Favre (1809 – 1880) was a French statesman and lawyer. After the establishment of the Third Republic in September 1870, he became one of the leaders of the Moderate Republicans in the National Assembly.
[11] Otto Eduard Leopold, Prince of Bismarck, Count of Bismarck-Schönhausen, Duke of Lauenburg (born Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck-Schönhausen (1815 – 1898) was a German statesman and diplomat who oversaw the unification of Germany and served as its first chancellor from 1871 to 1890.
[12] A milliard is a thousand million or one billion i.e. 10^9

What was of more immediate concern to the British Government than either the payment of the indemnity or the future of the Orleans princes, was the prospect of a new Commercial Treaty. This was sufficiently unpromising. Lord Lyons had pointed out during the Empire period, that under a Constitutional *régime* in France, we were not likely to enjoy such favourable commercial conditions as under personal government, and the more liberal the composition of a French Government, the more Protectionist appeared to be its policy. Thiers himself was an ardent Protectionist, quite unamenable to the blandishments of British Free Traders, who always appear to hold that man was made for

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Free Trade, instead of Free Trade for man, and the Finance Minister, Pouyer-Quertier,[13] entertained the same views as his chief. But, even if the Emperor were to come back, it was more than doubtful whether he would venture to maintain the existing Commercial Treaty as it stood, and there was every probability that the Bordeaux wine people and other so-called French Free Traders would turn Protectionist as soon as they realized that there was no prospect of British retaliation. What cut Lord Lyons (an orthodox Free Trader) to the heart, was that, just as the French manufacturers had got over the shock of the sudden introduction of Free Trade under the Empire and had adapted themselves to the new system, everything should be thrown back again. It was likely, indeed, that there would be some opposition to Thiers's Protectionist taxes, but he knew well enough that there were not a sufficient number of Free Traders in the Assembly, or in the country, to make any effective resistance to the Government. When approached on the subject, the French Ministers asserted that all they wanted was to increase the revenue, and that all they demanded from England was to be allowed to raise their tariff with this view only, whereas, in their hearts, they meant Protection pure and simple. Lord Lyons's personal view was that England would be better off if the Treaty was reduced to little more than a most favoured nation clause. "The only element for negotiation with the school of political economy now predominant here," he sadly remarked, "would be a threat of retaliation, and this we cannot use." It will be found subsequently that this was the one predominant factor in all commercial negotiations between the two Governments.

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A long conversation with Thiers, who was pressing for a definite reply from Her Majesty's Government on the subject of a new Treaty showed that matters from the British point of view were as unsatisfactory as they well could be. Thiers, whose language respecting England was courteous and friendly, made it clear that Her Majesty's Government must choose between the proposed modifications in the tariff and the unconditional denunciation of the whole Treaty, and that if the Treaty were denounced, England must not expect, after its expiration, to be placed upon the footing of the most favoured nation. He considered that he had a right to denounce the Treaty at once, but had no wish to act in an unfriendly spirit, and had therefore refrained from doing so, and although he and his colleagues considered that the existing Treaty was disadvantageous and even disastrous to France, they had never promoted any agitation against it, and had confined themselves to proposing modifications of the tariff, which their financial necessities and the state of the French manufacturing interests rendered indispensable. Coal and iron, which were articles of the greatest importance to England, were not touched, and all that had, in fact, been asked for was a moderate increase on the duties on textile fabrics. As for the French Free Traders, whatever misleading views they might put forward in London, their influence upon the Assembly would be imperceptible, and

[13] Augustin Thomas Pouyer-Quertier (1820 – 1891) was the French Minister for Finance.

it remained therefore for Her Majesty's Government to decide whether they would agree to the changes he had proposed to them, or would give up altogether the benefits which England derived from the Treaty. Thiers's real motive was disclosed later on, when,

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whilst asserting that he should always act in a friendly spirit towards England, he admitted that "England was a much more formidable competitor in commerce than any other nation." Concessions which might safely be made to other countries might very reasonably be withheld from her. For instance, privileges which might be safely granted to the Italian merchant navy might, if granted to Great Britain, produce a competition between English and French shipping very disadvantageous to France. It would also be certainly for the interest of France that she should furnish herself with colonial articles brought direct to her own ports rather than resort, as at present, to the depôts of such goods in Great Britain. Nothing could be further from his intentions than to be influenced by any spirit of retaliation, nor, if the Treaty should be denounced, would he, on that account, be less friendly to England in political matters; but it was evident that, in making his financial and commercial arrangements, the interests and necessities of France must be paramount. In conclusion he pressed for an immediate answer from Her Majesty's Government in order that the French Government might complete their plans, which were of urgent importance.

To the impartial observer the opinions expressed by Thiers seem to be logical, natural, and reasonable, unless the principle of looking after one's own interests is unreasonable; but to the ardent devotees of Free Trade, they must have appeared in the light of impiety. Lord Lyons, in reporting the interview, remarked that "nothing could have been more unsatisfactory than Thiers's language," and added significantly that he himself had managed to keep his temper.

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Thiers did not get his definite answer, and the wrangle continued until in February 1872, the French Government, with the general approval of the nation, gave notice of the termination of the Commercial Treaty of 1860.

The Bill abrogating the proscription of the French Royal families had been passed by the Assembly, and the elections of the Duc d'Aumale[14] and the Prince de Joinville[15] consequently declared valid, but these princes having established their rights, wisely remained in the background. Not so another illustrious Royalist, the Comte de Chambord. This prince, who was also included in the reversal of the disqualifying law, returned to France and issued a proclamation from the Château of Chambord in July which spread consternation in the Royalist camp. After explaining that his presence was only temporary and that he desired to create no embarrassment, he declared that he was prepared to govern on a broad basis of administrative decentralization, but that there were certain conditions to which he could not submit. If he were summoned to the throne he would accept, but he should retain his principles, and above all the White Flag which had been handed down to him by his ancestors. This announcement seemed, to say the least, premature, and the

[14] Henri Eugène Philippe Louis d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale (1822 – 1897) was a leader of the Orleanists, a political faction in 19th-century France associated with constitutional monarchy.
[15] François d'Orléans, Prince de Joinville (1818 – 1900) was the third son of Louis Philippe, King of the French, and his wife Maria Amalia of Naples and Sicily. An admiral of the French Navy, François was famous for bringing the remains of Napoleon from Saint Helena to France.

supporters of a Republic must have warmly congratulated themselves upon having to encounter an enemy who played so completely into their hands.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 11, 1871.

The Comte de Chambord seems to have upset the Legitimist[16] coach. The Legitimist Deputies have been obliged to repudiate the White Flag, being sure that they could never be elected to a new Chamber under that Banner,

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and of course, fusion between the Orleans Princes and their cousin is now out of the question.

Thiers said to me last night that he did not regard the Comte de Chambord's declaration in favour of the White Flag as irrevocable—and that it looked as if it had been made in a moment of ill-temper. According to Thiers, both the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris[17] eagerly desire to be kings—most people doubt, however, whether the Comte de Chambord does really wish it. All that has occurred tends to strengthen and prolong Thiers's hold on power, and he is rejoicing accordingly. Indeed, there is hardly a Frenchman who professes to doubt that Thiers's Government is the only Government possible at the moment.

Gambetta[18] is not considered by Thiers to be dangerous; he declares that he will only maintain a constitutional or legal opposition so long as the Government is Republican, and if he and his supporters stick to this, Thiers will certainly have no great cause to dread them. If Rouher had been elected he would have been a formidable opponent, though he has been too much accustomed to lead an applauding and acquiescing majority to be good at speaking to a hostile audience. Thiers says that the rejection of Rouher will be a good thing for his own health and repose, as he should have found it very fatiguing to have to answer the great Imperialist orator.

The hurry with which the new duties were rushed through the Assembly on Saturday is disquieting. Thiers and Jules Favre protest, however, that they are determined to do nothing irregular regarding the Commercial Treaties. The Swiss Minister tells me his Government is determined to insist upon the strict execution of the Swiss Treaty, without admitting any alteration of the tariffs, but then the Swiss Treaty does not expire for five or six years. I take care to give no opinion as to what we shall or shall not do. Thiers talked again last night of conferring with me soon about the details of the changes. I am not very anxious that he should do so, as confusion is much more

[16] The Legitimists (French: *Légitimistes*) were royalists who adhered to the rights of dynastic succession to the French crown of the descendants of the eldest branch of the Bourbon dynasty, which was overthrown in the 1830 July Revolution. They rejected the claim of the July Monarchy of 1830–1848 which placed Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, head of the Orléans cadet branch of the Bourbon dynasty, on the throne until he too was dethroned and driven with his family into exile.
[17] In 1871 the Comte de Paris was Philip of Orleans (1838 – 1894). He was the son of Ferdinand-Philippe of Orleans (died 1842). It was his grandfather, King Louis-Philippe 1st, who conferred on him the title of Count of Paris when he was born.
[18] Léon Gambetta (1838 – 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.

likely than anything else to arise from carrying on the discussion in both places at once.

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Half my time is taken up with the affairs of the unfortunate English prisoners. It is necessary to be cautious, for the French Authorities are extremely touchy on the subject. There does not appear to be any danger of their being executed, as fortunately they are a very insignificant and unimportant set of insurgents, if insurgents they were, but they are kept a long time without examination, and some do run the risk of being shipped off to New Caledonia.

The Comte de Chambord, having effectually destroyed the chances of his own party for the time being, now disappeared from the scene, and nothing more was heard of him or his White Flag for a considerable period.

The summer of 1871 did not pass without the old question of voting in the House of Lords cropping up again. In July, Lord Lyons received an intimation from the Liberal Whip that his vote was wanted on the following day, accompanied by a letter from Lord Granville in the same sense. He declined to come, on the same ground as formerly, *viz.* that he considered it advisable that a diplomatist should keep aloof from home politics, and also because he was extremely reluctant to give votes on questions of which he had little knowledge. The particular question involved was presumably a vote of censure on the Government in connection with the Army Purchase Bill, and he seems to have taken it for granted that Lord Granville would make no objection. A letter from the latter showed that he was mistaken.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, July 17, 1871.

I cannot agree with the principle you lay down—Lord Stuart,[19] my father,[20] the late Lord Cowley,[21] and Lord Normanby[22] when Ambassador at Paris used to vote when

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specially summoned. So did Lord Cowley, although he served under successive Governments. So did Lord Westmoreland[23] and others. I find no recommendation of

[19] Charles Stuart, 1st Baron Stuart de Rothesay (1779 – 1845), known as Sir Charles Stuart between 1812 and 1828, was a British diplomat. He was twice Ambassador to France and also served as Ambassador to Russia between 1841 and 1844.

[20] Granville Leveson-Gower, 1st Earl Granville (1773 – 1846), styled Lord Granville Leveson-Gower from 1786 to 1815 and The Viscount Granville from 1815 to 1833, was a British Whig statesman and diplomat from the Leveson-Gower family. He was British Ambassador to France in three spells from 1824 – 1828, 1830 – 1835 and 1835 – 1841.

[21] Henry Wellesley, 1st Baron Cowley GCB (1773 – 1847) was an Anglo-Irish diplomat and politician. He was the younger brother of the soldier and politician Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington.

[22] Constantine Henry Phipps, 1st Marquess of Normanby (1797 – 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 Ireland from 1835 to 1839 and as Home Secretary from 1839 to 1841 and was British Ambassador to France between 1846 and 1852.

[23] This may be John Fane, 11th Earl of Westmorland (1784 – 1859), styled Lord Burghersh until 1841, who was a British soldier, politician, diplomat, composer and musician. He was ambassador to Austria. Neither his father, John Fane the 19th Earl nor his eldest son Anthony Fane was ambassador to France

your principle in the report of the Committee of the House of Commons, and although Lord Derby[24] may have given evidence in favour of it, his father gave practical proof in several instances that he entirely disagreed with it.

A Foreign Government can hardly believe in the confidential relations of this Government and her Ambassador, if the latter being a Peer abstains from supporting them when a vote of want of confidence, or one amounting to it, is proposed against them.

Clarendon[25] brought before the Cabinet your disinclination to vote on the question of the Irish Church. They unanimously decided that we had a claim upon you, and you were good enough to consent, stating the grounds you mention in your letter of yesterday.

It is of course too late for any practical result to our controversy as regards to-night, but I hope you will consider that I have a claim on you for the future, when your vote is of importance. I shall never ask you unnecessarily to come over.

An intimation of this kind from an official chief could not well be disregarded, but the reply to Lord Granville's letter is conclusive in its arguments.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville
Paris, July 27, 1871.

Your letter of the 17th about my voting in the House of Lords goes farther than Lord Clarendon did on the previous occasion. Lord Clarendon originally acquiesced in my not voting on the Irish Church Bill, and when he subsequently begged me to come over, unless I objected to the Bill, he founded his request principally upon a strong opinion of Mr. Gladstone's[26] that it was the duty of a peer not to abstain from voting,

[24] The Lord Derby mentioned here must be the 15th Earl as his father died in 1869. He was Edward Henry Stanley (1826 – 1893) known as Lord Stanley from 1851 to 1869, who was a British statesman. He served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs twice, from 1866 to 1868 and from 1874 to 1878, and also twice as Colonial Secretary in 1858 and from 1882 to 1885. His father was Edward George Geoffrey Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby (1799 – 1869), known as Lord Stanley from 1834 to 1851, who was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served three times as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

[25] George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon (1800 – 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.

[26] William Ewart Gladstone (1809 – 1898) was a British statesman and Liberal politician, starting as Conservative MP for Newark and later becoming the leader of the Liberal Party. In a career lasting more than 60 years, he was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for 12 years, spread over four non-consecutive terms (the most of any British prime minister), beginning in 1868 and ending in 1894. He also was Chancellor of the Exchequer four times, for more than 12 years. Gladstone was also Leader of the House of Commons. He was a Member of Parliament (MP) for 60 years, from 1832 to 1845 and from 1847 to 1895; during that time, he represented a total of five constituencies. In 1834, when slavery was abolished across the British Empire, the owners were paid full value for the slaves. Gladstone helped his father obtain £106,769 (equivalent to £12,960,000 in 2023) in official reimbursement by the government for the 2,508 slaves he owned across nine plantations in the Caribbean.

and that every vote was of consequence. On this ground he expressed a hope that I should come over unless I was opposed to the Bill.

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Of my predecessors, the only one who was in a position resembling mine, was the present Lord Cowley; and certainly, he will always be a high authority with me.

I have been for more than thirty years, and I still am, devoted to my own profession, and I am sure that if I can be of any use in my generation, and do myself any credit, it must be as a diplomatist. I have worked my way up in the regular course of the profession, and have served under successive Governments, both before and since I became a peer, without any reference to home politics. In fact, I received my original appointment to the service from Lord Palmerston;[27] I was made paid attaché by Lord Aberdeen;[28] I was sent to Rome by Lord Russell;[29] to Washington by Lord Malmesbury;[30] to Constantinople by Lord Russell; and finally, to Paris by Lord Derby. The appointment was given to me in the ordinary way of advancement in my profession, and I was told afterwards by Lord Clarendon that my being wholly unconnected with any party at home had been considered to be a recommendation. I have myself always thought that a regular diplomatist could only impair his efficiency by taking part in home politics, and I have throughout acted upon this conviction. During the thirteen years or thereabouts which have elapsed since I succeeded to my father's peerage, I have given only one vote in the House of Lords; the question, the Irish Church vote, was one on which there really did seem to be a possibility that the decision might turn upon one vote; and the question, as it stood before the House, was hardly a party question.

In addition to all this, I must say that while I have a very great reluctance to give blind votes, I do not wish to be diverted from my diplomatic duties by having to attend to home questions; also, I would rather give my whole energies to carrying out the instructions of the Government abroad, without having continually to consult my conscience about voting in the House of Lords.

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[27] Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784 – 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.

[28] George Hamilton-Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen (1784 – 1860), styled Lord Haddo from 1791 to 1801, was a British statesman, diplomat and landowner, successively a Tory, Conservative and Peelite politician and specialist in foreign affairs. He served as Prime Minister from 1852 until 1855 in a coalition between the Whigs and Peelites, with Radical and Irish support.

[29] John Russell, 1st Earl Russell (1792 – 1878), known as Lord John Russell before 1861, was a British Whig and Liberal statesman who was 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.

[30] James Howard Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury (1807 – 1889), styled Viscount FitzHarris from 1820 to 1841, was a British statesman. Malmesbury served as Foreign Secretary under the Earl of Derby in 1852 and again from 1858 to 1859 and was also Lord Privy Seal under Derby and Benjamin Disraeli between 1866 and 1868 and under Disraeli between 1874 and 1876.

> I did not intend to have given you the trouble of reading a long answer to your letter, but I have just received another summons from Lord Bessborough.[31] I hope, however, you will not press me to come over to vote on Monday.

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> You were at all events good enough to say that you should never ask me to come unnecessarily; but if, after considering my reasons, you insist upon my coming, I must of course defer to your opinion and do what you desire.

It is difficult to believe that Lord Granville, who was one of the most amiable and considerate of men, was acting otherwise than under pressure in thus endeavouring to utilize an Ambassador as a party hack. His arguments certainly do not bear much investigation. If a foreign government could not feel any confidence in an Ambassador who failed to support his party by a vote in Parliament, what confidence could they possibly feel in him if his party were out of office, and he continued at his post under the orders of political opponents? If the Clarendon Cabinet really decided that they had a claim upon diplomatists as party men, it only showed that they were conspicuously wanting in judgment and a prey to that dementia which occasionally seizes upon British statesmen when a division is impending. That state of mind is intelligible when a division in the House of Commons is concerned, but what passes comprehension is that pressure should be put upon members of the House of Lords to vote, whose abstention is obviously desirable, whilst scores of obscure peers are left unmolested. One peer's vote was as good as another's in 1871, just as it is now; but in the division on the vote of censure on the Army Purchase Bill only 244 peers voted out of a House containing about double that number.

Before long the question of the prolongation of Thiers's powers for a fixed period became the chief topic of interest. He was infinitely the most important personage in France, and a large number

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of members were desirous of placing him more or less in the position of a constitutional sovereign, and obliging him to take a Ministry from the majority in the Assembly. The majority in the Assembly not unnaturally thought that their ideas ought to prevail in the Government, and they resented being constantly threatened with the withdrawal of this indispensable man, an action which, it was thought, would amount to little short of a revolution. What they wanted, therefore, was to bestow a higher title upon him than Chief of the Executive Power, which would exclude him from coming in person to the Assembly; and it was only the difficulty of finding some one to take his place, and the desire to get the Germans out of the Paris forts that kept them quiet. Like many other eminent persons considered to be indispensable, Thiers now began to give out that he really desired to retire into private life, and that it was only the country which insisted upon his staying in office, while as a matter of fact, he was by no means as indifferent to power as he fancied himself to be. In the Chamber he damaged his reputation to some extent by displays of temper and threats of resignation, but there was never much doubt as to the prolongation of his powers.

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[31] John George Brabazon Ponsonby, 5th Earl of Bessborough (1809 – 1880), styled Viscount Duncannon from 1844 until 1847, was a British cricketer, courtier and Liberal politician. In January 1866 he was appointed Lord Steward of the Household under Russell, a post he held until the Liberals lost power in June 1866, and again between 1868 and 1874 in William Ewart Gladstone's first administration.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Aug. 25, 1871.

Thiers quitted the Tribune in a pet yesterday, and the whole series of events in the Assembly has very much lowered his credit. In the one thing in which he was thought to be pre-eminent, the art of managing a deliberative body, he completely failed: and his first threatening to resign, and then coming back and half giving in, has very much damaged him. Nevertheless, the general

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opinion is that the prolongation of his powers will pass, upon his making it a condition, as a vote of confidence, of his remaining. But it is difficult to believe, even if it be passed by a considerable majority, that things can go on smoothly between him and the Assembly very long. If any party had a leader and courage, it might do almost anything in France at this moment.

Arnim[32] is expected on Saturday. I knew him years ago at Rome. I doubt his being a conciliatory negotiator. The French believe that Bismarck is so anxious to obtain commercial advantages for Alsace, that he will give them great things in return. He is supposed to wish, in the first place, to conciliate his new subjects; and, in the second, to divert for a time from Germany the torrent of Alsatian manufactures which would pour in if the outlets into France were stopped up. The French hope to get the Paris forts evacuated in return for a continuance of the free entrance of Alsatian goods into France until the 1st of January, and they even speculate upon getting the Prussians to evacuate Champagne, and content themselves with keeping the army, which was to have occupied it, inside the German frontier, the French paying the expenses, as if it were still in France. All this to be given in return for a prolongation of commercial privileges for Alsace. It would be ungenerous of 'most favoured nations' to claim similar privileges.

Thiers was too full of the events of the afternoon in the Assembly to talk about the Commercial Treaty. I don't believe he has brought the Committee round to his duties on raw materials.

At the end of August, the Assembly, by a very large majority. passed a bill conferring upon Thiers the title of President of the Republic and confirmed his powers for the duration of the existing Assembly, adopting at the same time a vote of confidence in him personally. The result of these proceedings was that

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the attempt to make a step towards the definite establishment of a Republic and to place Thiers as President for a term of years in a position independent of the Assembly, failed. The bill asserted what the Left had always denied, *viz.* the constituent power of the Assembly, and declared that the President was responsible to it. So far, it expressed the sentiments of the

[32] German Ambassador to Paris. (LN). Harry Karl Kurt Eduard, Count von Arnim-Suckow (1824 – 1881) was a German diplomat. He was raised by his uncle, Heinrich von Arnim who was Prussian ambassador to Paris from 1846 to 1848. Harry von Armin was appointed ambassador to France in 1872. He disagreed with Bismarck on policy. Bismarck ordered him to stand aloof from French party politics while Arnim wished to support the monarchical interest.

moderate men, and the minority was composed of extreme Legitimists and extreme Republicans. It also proved that Thiers was still held to be the indispensable man.

The Assembly, which had adjourned after the passing of the above-mentioned bill, met again in December, and was supposed to be more Conservative than ever, owing to the fear created by Radical progress in the country. Thiers's Presidential Message did not afford much satisfaction to the extreme partisans on either side, and it was evident that he did not desire any prompt solution of the Constitutional question, preferring to leave himself free, and not to be forced into taking any premature decision. As for the Legitimist, Orleanist, and Moderate Republican groups, their vacillation tended only to the advantage of two parties, the Bonapartists and the Red Republicans.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 26. 1871.

> The New Year will open gloomily for France. The Germans appear to be alarmed, or at all events irritated, by Thiers's military boasts and military preparations. The boasts are certainly unwise, and preparations or anything else which encourages the French to expect to get off paying the three milliards are extremely imprudent. The Germans mean to have their money and keep the

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> territory they have taken, and they say that they had better have it out with France now that she is weak, than wait till she has got strong again. The irritation of the French against the Germans seems to grow, and the Germans are angry with the French for not loving them, which after the conditions of peace, to say nothing of the events of the war, seems somewhat unreasonable.
>
> Thiers so far holds his own, and no party seems willing to displace him, while no party agrees with him. The one thing in which men of all parties seem to agree is in abusing Thiers, and I must say that a good deal of the abuse is exceedingly unjust. But with the members of the Assembly in this inflammable state of feeling towards him, an unexpected spark may at any moment make them flare up and turn him out almost before they are aware of it. The general idea is that the Assembly would appoint the Duc d'Aumale to succeed him; the acceptance of the Duc d'Aumale by the country would depend upon the amount of vigour he showed in putting down illegal opposition by force. There are members of the Assembly who wish to declare that in case of Thiers's abdication or dethronement, the President of the Assembly is to exercise the Executive Power. This is with a view of bringing forward Grévy,[33] who is an honourable, moderate man, but an old thoroughbred Republican. The immediate event people are looking forward to with interest and anxiety is the election of a deputy for Paris on the 7th of next month. No one will be surprised if a Red is returned, in consequence of the men of order declining to vote. The Legitimists and the Orleanists seem to be at daggers drawn again.

[33] François Judith Paul Grévy (1807 – 1891), known as Jules Grévy, was a French lawyer and politician who served as President of France from 1879 to 1887. He was a leader of the Moderate Republicans, and given that his predecessors were monarchists who tried without success to restore the French monarchy, Grévy is considered the first real republican president of France

> Arnim says that Bismarck's fierce despatch was partly intended to strengthen Thiers's hands in resisting violence against the Germans. If this is so, the ferocity went too far beyond the mark to be successful, great as the provocation on the French side was.
>
> I will write a mild disclaimer of the accuracy of Jules Favre's accounts of his communications with me. There is no *malus animus*,[34] I think, in them. My Russian and Italian colleagues are very much annoyed by the language he attributes to them.

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The fierce despatch referred was a harsh communication from Bismarck complaining of the recent acquittal of some Frenchmen who had assassinated German soldiers of the army of occupation.

At the close of 1871, the Bonapartist Party, although scarcely represented in the Assembly, appeared to be that which caused the Government the most anxiety. That party had undoubtedly made progress in the country; it held out the hope of a vigorous and determined maintenance of public order, and a vast number of Frenchmen were so much out of heart, so wearied and disgusted by the results of the attempts at political liberty, and so much afraid of the triumph of the Commune, that they were prepared to sacrifice anything in order to be assured of peace and tranquillity. The peasants, shopkeepers, and even many of the workmen in the towns, sighed for the material prosperity of the Empire. They believed that the Emperor had been betrayed by his Ministers and Generals, and were willing to excuse his personal share even in the capitulation of Sedan. If more confidence could have been felt in his health and personal energy, the advocates of a restoration of the Empire would have been still more numerous. As it was, a great mass of the ignorant and the timid were in favour of it, and it was the opinion of so impartial an observer as the British Ambassador, that if a free vote could have been taken under universal suffrage a majority would probably have been obtained for the re-establishment upon the throne of Napoleon III.[35] If the Imperialists could by any means have seized upon the executive Government and so directed the operations of a plébiscite, there was little doubt as to their securing the usual

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millions of votes under that process. With them, as with the other parties, the difficulty lay in bringing about such a crisis as would enable them to act, and the Emperor himself was disinclined to take any adventurous step.

The Legitimists had the advantage of holding to a definite principle, but it was a principle which carried little weight in the country in general. Their chief, the Comte de Chambord, had shown himself to be so impracticable, that it really seemed doubtful whether he wished to mount the throne, and the party had more members in the existing Assembly than it was likely to obtain if a fresh general election took place; added to which it had quarrelled with the Orleanists, a union with whom was essential to the attainment of any practical end.

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[34] Bad intention.
[35] Napoleon III (born Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte (1808 – 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 the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, 1st Emperor of France. Napoleon III took France into the Franco-Prussian War and was deposed after its defeat at the Battle of Sedan.

The Orleanists were weakened by their dissensions with the Legitimists and discouraged by what they considered the want of energy and enterprise of the Princes of the family. The members of the Orleans party suffered from the want of a definite principle, and consisted chiefly of educated and enlightened men who held to Constitutional Monarchy and Parliamentary Government; in reality they were a fluctuating body willing to accept any Government giving a promise of order and political liberty.

The moderate Republicans included in their ranks many honest and respected men, but they had to contend with the extreme unpopularity of the Government of National Defence in which they had formed the chief part, and although the existing Government was nominally based upon their principles, they did not appear to be gaining ground. The extreme Republicans endeavoured to make up by

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violence what they wanted in numerical strength, and as they saw no prospect of obtaining office in a regular manner, founded their hopes upon seizing power at a critical moment with the help of the Paris mob.

Amidst this collection of parties stood Thiers's Government, supported heartily by none, but accepted by all. By skilful management, by yielding where resistance appeared hopeless, and by obtaining votes sometimes from one side of the Assembly, and sometimes from the other, Thiers had carried many points to which he attached importance, and had never yet found himself in a minority. His Government was avowedly a temporary expedient, resting upon a compromise between all parties, or rather upon the adjournment of all constitutional questions. To the monarchical parties which formed the majority of the Assembly, Thiers's apparent adoption of the Republican system rendered him especially obnoxious. On the other hand, the Republicans were dissatisfied because, the whole weight of the Government was not unscrupulously used for the purpose of establishing a Republic permanently, with or without the consent of the people.

On the centralization of the administration, on military organization, on finance, and on other matters, Thiers's personal views were widely different from those generally prevalent in the Assembly, and there was plenty of censure and criticism of him in private; but no one party saw its way to ensuring its own triumph, and all were weighed down by the necessity of maintaining endurable relations with Germany. In forming such relations, Thiers had shown great skill and obtained considerable success

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in his arduous task. Bismarck, in imposing the hardest possible conditions of peace, had acted avowedly on the principle that it was hopeless to conciliate France, and that the only security for Germany lay in weakening her as much as possible. This policy having been carried out, the German public and the German press appeared to be quite surprised that France was slow to be reconciled to her conquerors, and even to doubt whether already France was not too strong for their safety. The apparent recovery of the French finances may well have surprised them disagreeably, but Thiers was not over careful to avoid increasing their distrust. His intention to create a larger army than France had ever maintained before, and his frequent praises of the army he already possessed, was not reassuring to them. It was, therefore, not altogether surprising that they should have felt some doubts as to the consequences of finding themselves confronted by an immense army, when they called upon France to pay the remaining three milliards in 1874. Nevertheless the German Government

had expressed its confidence in Thiers, and it would have been almost impossible for any new Government to have placed matters on as tolerable a footing.

All things considered, therefore, it seemed not improbable that the existing Government might last for some time, although its life was somewhat precarious, since it was liable to be upset by commotions and conspiracies, and having no existence apart from Thiers, its duration was bound to depend on the health and strength of a man nearly seventy-four years old.

In January 1872, Thiers, in consequence of a dispute in the Chamber over the question of a tax

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on raw materials, tendered his resignation, but was persuaded with some difficulty to reconsider it. "I have never known the French so depressed and so out of heart about their internal affairs," wrote Lord Lyons. "They don't believe Thiers can go on much longer, and they see nothing but confusion if he is turned out. The Legitimists and Orleanists are now trying for fusion. They are attempting to draw up a constitution on which they can all agree, and which, when drawn up, is to be offered to the Comte de Chambord, and if refused by him, then to the Comte de Paris. I hear they have not yet been able to come to an understanding on the first article. It all tends to raise the Bonapartists. Many people expect to hear any morning of a coup by which Thiers and the Assembly will be deposed, and an *appel au peuple*,[36] made to end in a restoration of the Empire." Probably it was the knowledge of a Bonapartist reaction in the country that led Thiers to make a singularly foolish complaint against an alleged military demonstration in England in favour of the ex-Emperor.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Feb. 9, 1872.

> M. Thiers said to me yesterday at Versailles that he had been told that a general of the name of Wood[37] had marched 6000 of Her Majesty's troops to Chislehurst to be reviewed by the Emperor Napoleon.
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> M. Thiers went on to say that no one could appreciate more highly than he did the noble and generous hospitality which England extended to political exiles, and that he had indeed profited by it in his own person. He admired also the jealousy with which the English nation regarded all attempts from abroad to interfere with the free exercise

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> of this hospitality. He should never complain of due respect being shown to a Sovereign Family in adversity. But he thought that there was some limit to be observed in the matter. For instance, he himself, while on the best terms with the

[36] Appeal to the people.
[37] This could be General Thomas Wood (1804 – 1872), who was a British Army officer and a Conservative politician. He sat in the House of Commons from 1837 to 1847. Camden Place in Chislehurst was the last home of Napoleon III in his exile in England before his death on 9 January 1873.

> reigning dynasty in Spain, still always treated the Queen Isabella,[38] who was in France, with great respect and deference. Nevertheless, when Her Majesty had expressed a desire to go to live at Pau, he had felt it to be his duty to ask her very courteously to select a residence at a greater distance from the frontier of Spain. In this, as in all matters, he felt that consideration for the exiles must be tempered by a due respect for the recognized Government of their country. Now if the Emperor Napoleon should choose to be present at a review of British troops, there could be no objection to his being treated with all the courtesy due to a head which had worn a crown. It was, however, a different thing to march troops to his residence to hold a review there in his honour.

Thiers had not taken the trouble to substantiate his ridiculous complaint, and his action was an instance of the extreme gullibility of even the most intelligent French statesmen, where foreign countries are concerned, and so perturbed was the French Government at the idea of a Bonapartist restoration, that according to Captain Hotham,[39] British Consul at Calais, two gunboats, the Cuvier and Faon, were at that time actually employed in patrolling the coast between St. Malo and Dunkirk with a view to preventing a possible landing of the Emperor Napoleon. A little later, the Duc de Broglie,[40] French Ambassador in London, made a tactless remonstrance to Lord Granville with regard to the presence of the Emperor and Empress at Buckingham Palace, on the occasion of a National Thanksgiving held to celebrate the recovery of the Prince of Wales[41] from a dangerous illness.

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Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 1, 1872.

> The Duc de Broglie told me to-day that he had been rather surprised when he heard of the Emperor and Empress having been at Buckingham Palace on so public an occasion as that of last Tuesday, that I had not mentioned it to him on Monday afternoon, when we had had a long conversation. It would have enabled him to write to M. de Rémusat,[42] and thus have prevented any of the effect which a sudden announcement in the papers might create in France.

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[38] Isabella II (Spanish: Isabel II, María Isabel Luisa de Borbón y Borbón-Dos Sicilias; (1830 – 1904) was Queen of Spain from 1833 until her deposition in 1868. She is the only queen regnant in the history of unified Spain. Isabella was the elder daughter of King Ferdinand VII and Queen Maria Christina who had no son. She came to the throne a month before her third birthday, but her succession was disputed by her uncle, Infante Carlos (founder of the Carlist movement), whose refusal to recognize a female sovereign led to the Carlist Wars.

[39] This could be Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Frederick Hotham (1843 – 1925). At the beginning of a distinguished career he had been appointed to the rank of Captain on 29 December 1871.

[40] Albert de Broglie, 4th Duke of Broglie (1821 – 1901) was a French monarchist politician, diplomat and writer of historical works and translations. De Broglie twice served as Prime Minister of France, first from May 1873 to May 1874, and again from May to November 1877.

[41] The Prince of Wales at this period was the future King Edward VII (1841 – 1910).

[42]Foreign Minister in succession to M. Jules Favre. (LN). Charles François Marie, Comte de Rémusat (1797 – 1875) was a French politician and writer. In 1871, he refused the Vienna embassy offered him by Thiers, but in August he was appointed minister of foreign affairs in succession to Jules Favre.

I told him that I had not been consulted and did not know the fact of the invitation when I saw him, and that if I had, I should probably have mentioned it to him, although not a subject about which I should have written.

I should have explained to him that it was an act of courtesy of the Queen to those with whom she had been on friendly relations, and that it was analogous to many acts of courtesy shown by the Queen to the Orleanist Princes.
He laid stress on the publicity of the occasion, and on the few opportunities which he, as Ambassador, had of seeing the Queen, of which he made no complaint; but it made any attentions to the Emperor on public occasions more marked. He was afraid that the announcement would produce considerable effect, not upon statesmen, but upon the press in France.

I repeated that the admission of the Emperor and Empress had no political significance, but had been in pursuance with the long-established habit of the Queen to show personal courtesy to Foreign Princes with whom she had been formerly on friendly relations.

The fall of the Finance Minister, Pouyer Quertier,[43] in the spring had given rise to hopes that the French commercial policy would become more liberal, but

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the letters quoted below show how powerless were the arguments of the British Government and how completely wasted upon the French Ministers were the lamentations of the British free traders, and their prognostications of ruin to those who were not sufficiently enlightened to adopt their policy.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 5, 1872.

I suppose Pouyer Quertier is really out, but we see so many changes from hour to hour in resolutions here, that I shall not report it officially until his successor is gazetted. We cannot have a more Protectionist successor; but, after all, no one is so bigoted a Protectionist as Thiers himself.

Nevertheless, the change of Minister will give a chance or an excuse for a change of policy to some extent. I think that with a view to this some stronger expression of displeasure, or rather perhaps of regret than we have hitherto ventured upon, might have a good effect. The new Minister and perhaps even Thiers himself might be struck by a report from Broglie that you had put strongly before him the impossibility, whatever efforts the Government might make, of preventing public opinion in England becoming hostile to France if the present commercial policy is persisted in. It is in fact plain that there is no probability of France obtaining the concessions from the Treaty Powers, on which Thiers professed to reckon. The result already is that whatever may have been the intention, the Mercantile Marine Law is in practice a blow which falls on England, and not on other European Powers. Unless the French Government means to give us a real most favoured nation clause, the result of

[43] Augustin Thomas Pouyer-Quertier (1820 – 1891) was the French Minister for Finance from 25 February 1871 - 5 March 1872.

denouncing our treaty will be to place us, when it expires, at a special disadvantage as compared with other nations. And what it now asks us to effect by negotiation, is to hasten the moment at which it can accomplish this. It is quite idle to talk of special friendship for us, when its measures practically treat us much worse than they do the Germans.

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M. de Rémusat[44] and some other people are fond of saying that it is quite impossible that France could bear to see two nations so friendly as Belgium and England placed exceptionally in a position inferior to Germany. But France seems to bear this with great equanimity so far as our merchant navy is concerned.

The demand we have made to be exempted from the *surtaxes de pavillon*[45] under our most favoured nation clause would give the French Government a means of remedying the injustice if it wished to do so. At any rate some strong expressions of discontent on our part might increase the disinclination of the Assembly and some members of the Government to insist on imposing the duties on the raw materials. It would be very convenient if there were some retaliatory measures to which we could resort, without injuring ourselves or departing from our own Free Trade principles. The French Government grossly abuses, in order to influence the Assembly, our assurances of unimpaired good will, and reluctance to retaliate; and so, in my opinion, is preparing the way for the real diminution of good will which its success in carrying its protectionist measures, to our special injury, must produce in the end.

The present Government of France does not gain strength; far from it. The Imperialists are gaining strength, as people become more and more afraid of the Reds, and feel less and less confidence in the power either of Thiers, or the Comte de Chambord, or the Comte de Paris, to keep them down. The end will probably be brought about by some accident when it is least expected. It would not be wise to leave out of the calculation of possibilities, the chance of Thiers's Government dragging on for some time yet, and it would be very difficult to predict what will succeed it. At present the Legitimists and Orleanists seem to have lost, and to be daily losing prestige, and naturally enough, to be bringing down with them the Assembly in which they are or were a majority.

Perhaps I ought to say that the despatch which I send you to-day about the sojourn of our Royal Family in the South of France applies exclusively to them. Everybody

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knows or ought to know that affairs are uncertain in France, but I should not think it necessary or proper to warn private people against coming to France or staying there. The conspicuous position of members of the Royal Family increases the risk of their being placed in awkward circumstances, and circumstances which would be of little consequence in the case of private people, would be very serious and embarrassing if they affected members of the Royal Family of England.

[44] Charles François Marie, Comte de Rémusat (1797 – 1875) was a French politician and writer.
[45] Tax levied on the occasion of the importation of a good carried by a foreign vessel, in addition to the taxes normally levied.

The last passage referred to a stay at Nice contemplated by the Prince of Wales. In the event of any change of Government, it was always feared that disorders would take place in the southern towns of France.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 14, 1872.

> The commercial disputes with the French Government which, as you know, I always apprehended, are coming thick upon us. I foresaw what was coming and begged Thiers, Rémusat and other members of the Government over and over again to guard against vexations in the execution of the Treaty while it lasted. I make little doubt, notwithstanding, that all these violent and unfair proceedings are prompted, not checked, from Paris.
>
> The Spaniards have found out the only way to deal with the Protectionist spirit here. The slightest hint at retaliation would have such an effect in the Assembly as to stop the onward career of illiberality. As things now are, the extortioners have the game in their own hands. They levy what duty they please and pay just as much or as little attention as may suit them, to our remonstrances. It is a very disagreeable affair for one who, like myself, is really anxious that there should be good feeling between the two countries. We are in a fix. On the one hand, we cannot, without injuring ourselves and abandoning our principles, retaliate; and on the other hand, while they

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> feel sure we shall do no more than remonstrate, the Protectionist officials will care very little. If indeed the general opinion is to be relied upon, the present Government and its chief may come down with a crash at any moment, but I don't know whether a change would benefit us commercially.

Lord Lyons, like Lord Granville and other English public men and officials of the day, was a Free Trader, as has already been stated. But it would be difficult for the most ardent Protectionist to make out a stronger case against the helplessness of a Free Trade policy when negotiating with a foreign Government than is disclosed in these letters, and there are any number of others all in the same strain. All the protestations of goodwill, of sympathy, and benefit to the human race, *etc.,* were, and presumably are still, a pure waste of time when addressed to a country about to frame a tariff in accordance with its own interests, unless the threat of retaliation is used in order to retain some bargaining power, as apparently the Spaniards had already discovered.

It has already been stated that Thiers's plans of military re-organization and his somewhat imprudent language had caused some agitation in Germany, and when the German Ambassador, Count Arnim, returned to his post at Paris in the spring of 1872, it was freely rumoured that he was the bearer of remarkably unpleasant communications. These apprehensions turned out to be exaggerated, and Thiers in conversation always assumed a lamb-like attitude of peace. He denied that the Germans had addressed any representations to him, said that all suspicions against him were grossly unjust, that it would be absolute madness for France to think of

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going to war, and that, for his part, the keystone of all his foreign policy was peace. As for his army reform schemes, he was a much-misunderstood man. He was undoubtedly reorganizing the military forces of France, and it was his duty to place them upon a respectable footing and so provide a guarantee for peace. It was, however, quite false to say that he was arming, for that term implied that he was making preparations for war, and that he was putting the army into a condition to pass at once from a state of peace to a state of war. He was doing nothing of the sort; on the contrary, his efforts were directed to obtaining the evacuation of the territory, by providing for the payment of the war indemnity to Germany, and it could hardly be supposed that if he were meditating a renewal of the contest, he would begin by making over three milliards to her.

From Arnim's language, it appeared that the German public was irritated and alarmed at the perpetual harping of the French upon the word "Revenge," and that the German military men (the militaires who were always so convenient to Bismarck for purposes of argument) conceived that the best guarantee for peace would be to keep their soldiers as long as possible within a few days' march of Paris.

The German fears were, no doubt, greatly exaggerated, but if they existed at all they were largely due to Thiers's own language, who, while not talking indeed of immediate revenge, was fond of boasting of the strength and efficiency of the French army, and even of affirming that it was at that very moment equal to cope with the Germans. That he was conscious of having created suspicion

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may be inferred from the fact that when the Prince of Wales passed through Paris on his way from Nice to Germany, he begged H.R.H. to use his influence at the Court of Berlin to impress upon the Emperor and all who were of importance there, that the French Government, and the President himself in particular, desired peace above all things, and were resolved to maintain it. A letter from the British Ambassador at Berlin throws some light upon the prevalent German feeling.

Mr. Odo Russell[46] to Lord Lyons.
British Embassy, Berlin, April 27, 1872.

> Since your letter of the 9th inst. reached me, feelings have changed in Berlin.
>
> Thiers's Army bill and Speech have irritated the Emperor, Bismarck and indeed everybody.
>
> The Generals tell the Emperor it would be better to fight France before she is ready than after; but Bismarck, who scorns the Generals, advises the Emperor to fight France morally through Rome and the Catholic alliances against United Germany.

[46] Subsequently Lord Ampthill (LN). Odo William Leopold Russell, 1st Baron Ampthill (1829 – 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.

Although he denies it, Bismarck probably caused those violent articles against Thiers to appear in the English newspapers, and he tells everybody that Thiers has lost his esteem and may lose his support. The next grievance they are getting up against him is that he is supposed to have made offers through Le Flô[47] to Russia against Germany.

In short, from having liked him and praised him and wished for him, they are now tired of him and think him a traitor because he tries to reform the French Army on too large a scale!

Gontaut[48] does not appear to do anything beyond play the agreeable, which he does perfectly, and everyone likes him. But it is said that Agents, financial Agents I presume, are employed by Thiers to communicate through

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Jewish Bankers here indirectly with Bismarck. Through these agents Thiers is supposed to propose arrangements for an early payment of the 3 milliards and an early withdrawal of the German troops of occupation, —the payment to be effected by foreign loans and the guarantee of European Bankers—in paper not in gold. Bismarck has not yet pronounced definitely, but the Emperor William won't hear of shortening the occupation of France. Indeed, he regrets he cannot by Treaty leave his soldiers longer still as a guarantee of peace while he lives, for he is most anxious to die at peace with all the world.

So that nothing is done and nothing will be done before Arnim returns to Paris. He has no sailing orders yet and seems well amused here.

Lord Lyons to Mr. Odo Russell.
Paris, May 7, 1872.

Many thanks for your interesting letter.

Arnim's account of public opinion at Berlin entirely confirms that which you give, only he says Bismarck would be personally willing to come to an arrangement with France for payment of the milliards and the evacuation of the territory, but that he will not run any risk of injuring his own position by opposing either Moltke or public opinion on this point.

I don't think the Germans need the least fear the French attacking them for many years to come. The notion of coming now to destroy France utterly, in order to prevent her ever in the dim future being able to revenge herself, seems simply atrocious. The French are so foolish in their boasts, and the Germans so thin-skinned, that I am afraid of mischief.

[47] Adolphe Charles Emmanuel Le Flô (1804 – 1887) was a French Army general, politician, and diplomat. An Orléanist, he served as the Third Republic's first Minister of War under Gambetta and Thiers.

[48] French Ambassador to Berlin. (LN). Anne-Armand-Élie de Gontaut-Biron (1817 – 1890) was a French politician. He was the French ambassador to Germany from 1872 to 1877.

I should doubt Bismarck's being wise in setting himself in open hostility to the Vatican. The favour of the Holy See is seldom of any practical use, so far as obtaining acts in its favour, to a Protestant or even to a Roman Catholic Government; but the simple fact of being notoriously in antagonism to it, brings a vast amount of opposition and

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ill-will on a Government that has Catholic subjects. The fear of this country's being able at this moment to work the Catholic element in Germany or elsewhere against the German Emperor appears to me to be chimerical.

I wish the Germans would get their milliards as fast as they can, and go: then Europe might settle down, and they need not be alarmed about French vengeance, or grudge the French the poor consolation of talking about it.

Arnim was a good deal struck by the decline in Thiers's vigour, since he took leave of him before his journey to Rome, but he saw Thiers some days ago, when the little President was at his worst.

Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Lyons.
British Embassy, Berlin, May 11, 1872.

I have nothing new to say about the relations of France and Germany, but my friends here seem so alarmed at the idea that France cannot pay the much longed for three milliards, that if Thiers really does pay them, all the rest will be forgiven and forgotten, and the withdrawal of the German troops will then be impatiently called for. Like yourself I write the impressions of the moment and am not answerable for future changes of public opinion. Clearly the thing to be desired for the peace of the world is the payment by France and the withdrawal by Germany, after which a normal state of things can be hoped for—not before.

The Pope, to my mind, has made a mistake in declining to receive Hohenlohe.[49] He ought to have accepted and in return sent a Nuncio to Berlin, thereby selling Bismarck, and controlling his German Bishops and the Döllinger movement.[50]

Bismarck is going away on leave to Varzin. He is so irritable and nervous that he can do no good here at present, and rest is essential to him.

Your letter of the 7th is most useful to me, many thanks for it. I shall not fail to keep you as well informed as I can.

[49] Chlodwig Carl Viktor, Prince of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Prince of Ratibor and Corvey (1819 – 1901), usually referred to as the Prince of Hohenlohe, was a German statesman, who served as the imperial chancellor of the German Empire and minister-president of Prussia from 1894 to 1900.

[50] Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger (1799 – 1890), also Doellinger in English, was a German theologian, Catholic priest and church historian who rejected the dogma of papal infallibility. Among his writings which proved controversial, his criticism of the papacy antagonized ultramontanes (those who believed in the powers of the Pope in matters related to civil state governance) yet his reverence for tradition annoyed the liberals.

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In reality, the Germans made little difficulty about the arrangements for the payment of the indemnity and evacuation of French territory, and early in July Thiers was able to state confidently that he felt certain of being able to pay the whole of the indemnity by March, 1874, and that he had only obtained an additional year's grace in order to guard against accidents.

A curious incident which occurred in July 1872, showed how, if sufficient ingenuity be employed, a trivial personal question may be turned to important political use. The Comte de Vogué,[51] French Ambassador at Constantinople, who possessed little or no diplomatic experience, before proceeding on leave from his post, had an audience of the Sultan. The Sultan received him standing, and began to talk, when Vogué interrupted His Majesty, and begged to be allowed to sit down, as other Ambassadors had been accustomed to do, according to him, on similar occasions. What the Sultan actually did at the moment was not disclosed, but he took dire offence, and telegrams began to pour in upon the Turkish Ambassador at Paris desiring him to represent to the French Government that if Vogué came back his position would be very unpleasant—intimating in fact that his return to Constantinople must be prevented. The French Foreign Minister, however, refused this satisfaction to the Sultan, and the Turkish Ambassador in his perplexity sought the advice of Lord Lyons, who preached conciliation, and urged that, at all events, no steps ought to be taken until Vogué had arrived at Paris, and was able to give his version of the incident. The French, naturally enough, were at that moment peculiarly susceptible on all such matters, and more reluctant

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to make a concession than if they were still on their former pinnacle of grandeur at Constantinople, although Vogué was clearly in the wrong, for Lord Lyons admitted that he had himself never been asked to sit. The importance of the incident consisted in the fact that it gave an opportunity of cultivating the goodwill of Russia, as the traditional enemy of Turkey. No Frenchman had ever lost sight of the hope that some day or other an ally against Germany might be found in Russia, and there were not wanting signs of a reciprocal feeling on the part of the latter. It had, for instance, been the subject of much remark, that the Russian Ambassador at Paris, Prince Orloff,[52] had recently been making immense efforts to become popular with all classes of the French: Legitimists, Orleanists, Imperialists, Republicans, and especially newspaper writers of all shades of politics. As it was well known that neither Prince nor Princess Orloff were really fond of society, these efforts were almost overdone, but nevertheless they met with a hearty response everywhere, from Thiers downwards, for all Frenchmen were eagerly hoping for a quarrel between Russia and Germany, and were ready to throw themselves into the arms of the former in that hope. Russia, on her side, was clearly not unwilling to cultivate a friendship which cost nothing, and might conceivably be of considerable profit.

On November 5 the new Anglo-French Commercial Treaty was signed, indignant British Free Traders striving to console themselves with the thought that France would soon discover

[51] Charles-Jean-Melchior, Marquis de Vogüé (1829 – 1916) was a French archaeologist, diplomat, and member of the Académie française. President Adolphe Thiers appointed him as Ambassador of France to Constantinople in 1871, then to Vienna in 1875.
[52] Prince Nikolay Alekseyevich Orlov (1827 – 1885) was a Russian nobleman, soldier, social reformer and diplomat. He started his career as an officer in the Russian army, and later served variously as the Russian ambassador to Belgium, Great Britain, France, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Germany.

the error of her ways and cease to lag behind the rest of the civilized world in her economic heresy.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 12, 1872.

> I saw Thiers on Friday after I wrote to you on that day and I dined with him on Saturday. He looked remarkably well and was in high spirits and in great good humour, as he ought to be, with us. He spoke, as indeed he always does, as if he felt quite sure that he should have his own way with the Assembly in all things. As regards the organic measures, he talked as if the fight would be entirely with the Right; but both sections of the Left have declared against organic changes to be made by this Assembly. I suppose, however, Thiers is pretty sure to get his own powers prolonged for four years certain, and this is what he cares about.
>
> I do not, however, find in my Austrian, German, and Russian colleagues so unqualified an acquiescence in Thiers remaining in power as they professed before I went away. It is said that the three Emperors at Berlin were alarmed at the prospect of the definitive establishment of any Republic, and still more so at the apparent tendency of M. Thiers's policy to leave the country to drift into a Red Republic, whenever he quitted the scene. However this may be, there is certainly a change in the language of their Representatives here, not very marked, but nevertheless quite perceptible. Orloff in particular talks as if an immediate Imperialist restoration were not only desirable but probable. If he really thinks it probable, he is almost alone in the opinion.
>
> The Prince de Joinville, who came to see me yesterday, said that he had been a great deal about in the country, and that he found everywhere an absolute indifference to persons and dynasties, and a simple cry for any Government which would efficiently protect property. He thought that Thiers would be supported for this reason, but that whatever institutions might be nominally established, they would last only as long as Thiers himself did, and that afterwards everything would be in question, and the country probably divide itself into two great parties,

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> Conservatives and Reds, between whom there would be a fierce struggle notwithstanding the great numerical superiority of the former.

In the absence of exciting internal topics, the year closed with a slight sensation provided by Gramont,[53] who, it might have been supposed, would have preferred not to court further notoriety. Count Beust[54] had recently asserted that he had warned France against expecting help from Austria in the event of a war with Prussia. Gramont replied by publishing a letter

[53] Agénor de Gramont, 10th Duke of Gramont (Antoine Alfred Agénor; 1819 – 1880) was a French diplomat and statesman who also had the title Prince of Bidache.

[54] Count Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust (1809 – 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. Towards the end of his diplomatic career, at his own request, he was appointed Austrian ambassador at London; in 1878 he was transferred to Paris; in 1882 he retired from public life

in which the following statement occurred. "*L'Autriche considère la cause de la France comme la sienne, et contribuera au succès de ses armes dans les limites du possible*."[55] This quotation was supposed to be taken from a letter from Beust to Metternich,[56] dated July 20, 1870 (the day after the declaration of war), and left by Metternich with Gramont, who took a copy and returned the original. Metternich was believed to have shown the letter also to the Emperor Napoleon and to Ollivier.[57] The letter was represented as going on to say that the neutrality proclaimed by Austria was merely a blind to conceal her armaments, and that she was only waiting till the advance of winter rendered it impossible for Russia to concentrate her forces.

It was generally believed that there was plenty of evidence that an offensive and defensive alliance was in course of negotiation between France and Austria in 1869, though no treaty was signed, and the record appears to have consisted in letters exchanged between the two Emperors, but as Gramont had nothing more than a copy of a letter from Beust to Metternich his evidence was legally defective,

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whatever its moral value, and it was questionable whether as an ex-Minister he had any right to disclose such secrets.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 31, 1872.

> Gramont's further revelations confirm what I told you in my letter of the 24th. The question is becoming tiresome. I conceive there is no doubt that Beust at Vienna, and Metternich here, fanned the flame of French discontent after Sadowa, with a view to avenging themselves when Austria and France should be ready, and circumstances favourable. I think also that Gramont came back from Vienna full of Beust's warlike ideas, and very well inclined to carry them out. What exchange of letters may have taken place between the two Emperors, or what record of any kind there may be of engagements between the two countries to help one another, it is more difficult to say.
>
> The assertion is that after war had been declared, Austria engaged to move on the 15th of September. Others say that she also required that France should have an army in Baden.
>
> This is not inconsistent with her having dissuaded France from war in July 1870, when she knew positively it would be premature for herself, and probably had some suspicion that France was also not really prepared.

Early in January 1873, the Emperor Napoleon died at Chiselhurst. The view of Thiers was that this event would render the Bonapartists, for the time, more turbulent and less dangerous.

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[55] "Austria considers the cause of France as her own and will contribute to the success of her arms within the limits of what is possible." (*Google Translate*)

[56] Richard Klemens Prince Metternich-Winneburg (1829 – 1896) was ambassador to Paris from 1859 to 1871. He was the eldest surviving son of the Klemens, Prince of Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein who was a dominant figure in European diplomacy in the first half of the 19th century.

[57] Olivier Émile Ollivier (1825 – 1913) was a French statesman. Starting as an 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.

He believed that the Emperor's personal influence had been used to quiet the impatience of his followers, while, on the other hand, his death removed the only member of the family who was popular enough in France to be a formidable candidate. Thiers's

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childish susceptibility with regard to the Bonapartists showed itself in his expressed hope that the Emperor's death would be followed by the disappearance of the public sympathy in England with the family in its misfortunes.

The opinions of Thiers seem to have been generally prevalent. The Emperor was remarkably kind and courteous to all who approached him; he was a firm friend; not, as a rule, an implacable enemy, and he inspired no small number of people with a warm attachment to him personally. He was also generally popular, and the glittering prosperity of the early part of his reign was attributed by a large part of the common people to his own genius and merits, while they were prone to consider that its disastrous close was due to treason. No other member of the family excited feelings of the same kind, and in France a cause was always so largely identified with an individual that there was no doubt that the hold of the Imperialists upon the country was largely weakened by the loss of their chief.

It is perhaps worth noting that Lord Lyons, although it was notoriously difficult to extract any such opinions from him, did in after years admit reluctantly to me, that although he liked Napoleon III personally, he had always put a low estimate upon his capacity.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Jan. 31, 1873.

> I cannot say that the political atmosphere grows clearer. The Right are in their hearts as anxious as ever to depose Thiers. They believe as firmly as ever that if he makes the new elections, he will have a Chamber, not only of

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> Republicans, but of very advanced Republicans. They see that all their little endeavours to restrain him and to establish ministerial responsibility will have no political effect. The death of the Emperor has not strengthened Thiers's position with regard to the Right. On the contrary, they are less disposed to bear with him since the removal of the candidate for the Throne of whom they were most afraid, and from whom they justly thought that Thiers would make every effort to shield them. They are consequently, even more than they usually are, employed in casting about for something to put in Thiers's place. The Fusion is again "almost" made, and MacMahon is again talked of as ready to take the Government during the transition from the Republic to the King.
>
> Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador, propounded to me to-day a plan of his own for preventing conflicts between Russia and England in Central Asia. So far as I understood it, it was that England and Russia should enter into a strict alliance, should encourage and protect, by force of arms, commerce between their Asiatic Dominions, and unite them at once by a railroad. He said there was a Russian company already formed which desired to connect the Russian railway system with the Anglo-Indian

> railways. He told me that Brünnow[58] was always writing that war between England and Russia was imminent and that England was preparing for it. If Brünnow's vaticinations[59] are believed, they may perhaps have a not unwholesome effect upon the Russian Government.

Prince Orloff seems to have had in contemplation that Trans-Persian Railway which has met with the approval of the Russian and British Governments at the present day. The Russian advance in Central Asia in 1872 and 1873 had been the subject of various perfectly futile representations on the part of Her Majesty's Government, but Baron Brünnow must have been a singularly credulous diplomatist if he really believed that we were

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making preparations for a war with Russia or anyone else.

If Orloff with prophetic insight foresaw a Trans-Persian Railway, Thiers might be acclaimed as being the first person to suggest the project of the Triple Entente between England, France, and Russia. Strangely enough it was the affairs of Spain that put this notion into his head, the idea prevalent in France being that Germany was bent on making that country a dangerous neighbour to France and bestowing a Hohenzollern[60] prince upon her as sovereign. The prospect of an 'Iberic Union,' which was being discussed at the time, was considered to be exceptionally threatening to France, and Thiers had had quite enough of united states on the French frontier.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 4, 1873.

> M. Thiers spoke to me last night very confidentially about Spain and Portugal. The Spanish question was, he said, becoming so serious that it could hardly be considered an internal question. Among other things, the independence of Portugal was at stake. Now, in his opinion, the best chance of avoiding a collision between the Powers of Europe would be that England, France, and Russia should come to an understanding on the subject. He did not think that there would be any difficulty in effecting such an understanding; and indeed he had reason to believe that Russia was at this moment particularly well disposed to act in concert with England. He was far from being so absurd as to propose a new Holy Alliance; indeed, he desired to avoid all show and ostentation—indeed all publicity. He simply wished that, without any parade, the three Powers he had named should concert measures in order to avert events which might imperil the peace of Europe. After some further conversation, he observed

[58] Ernst Philipp Graf von Brünnow (1797 – 1875) was a Baltic German diplomat who served in the Russian Empire. Brünnow represented Russia in several conferences and held ambassadorial positions in London (1840–1854), Frankfurt (1855), Berlin (1856), and then returned to London (1858–1874).
[59] Vaticinations refer to the act of prophesying or making predictions about the future. The term is derived from the Latin word for "prophet" and has been used since the early 17th century.
[60] 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 (1835 – 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.

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that it would be impossible to avert a collision, if the Peninsula were formed into one Iberic state with a Hohenzollern for a monarch.

I did not invite M. Thiers to state more definitely in what form he proposed that the understanding between France, Russia, and England should be effected, or what combined action he proposed they should adopt. I thought indeed that it would be very dangerous for France to enter into any sort of an alliance with Foreign Powers against Germany at this moment, and that the smallest result might be to delay the evacuation of French territory. Nor indeed did I know that there was any evidence that Germany was actively pursuing designs in Spain in such a way and to such a degree, as would render it proper or advantageous to try the hazardous experiment of undertaking to settle a European question without her, not to say in spite of her.

I consequently only listened to what M. Thiers said. He concluded by telling me to treat his idea as most strictly confidential and to confide it only to your ear in a whisper.

As regards the state of Spain, M. Thiers said that he believed the Federal Party was after all the party of order; that at all events it was predominant in all the outer circumference of Spain; that the Unitarians[61] existed only in Madrid and the central provinces, and that the North was Carlist[62] or Federal. This being the case, his advice to the Government of Madrid had been to make concessions to the Federals. He did not think that, if properly managed, their pretensions would go much beyond what was called in France "decentralisation administrative."

The view of the Federals being the party of order in Spain was new to me, but M. Thiers was beset by a host of deputies and I could not continue the conversation.

A letter from Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons admirably defines the attitude of Germany and is an exceptionally lucid summary of Bismarckian policy in general.

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Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons
British Embassy, Berlin, March 14, 1873.

Thanks for yours of the 4th instant.

[61] Unitarianism is a liberal religious movement that emerged during the Reformation in various countries, including Poland, Transylvania, and England, and later in North America. Unitarian leaders sought a reformation based on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, finding no basis for the doctrine of the Trinity.

[62] Carlism was a political movement in Spain aimed at establishing an alternative branch of the Bourbon dynasty, one descended from Don Carlos, Count of Molina (1788–1855) on the Spanish throne. It was founded as a consequence of an early 19th-century dispute over the succession of the Spanish monarchy and dissatisfaction with the Alfonsine line of the House of Bourbon, and subsequently found itself becoming a notable element of Spanish conservatism in its 19th-century struggle against liberalism, which repeatedly broke out into military conflicts known as the Carlist Wars.

As regards Spain, Thiers, and Bismarck I cannot add anything more definite or more precise. Bismarck and the Emperor William[63] are so far satisfied that the Republic will make room for the Alphonsists so that they can afford to wait and look on.

What Bismarck intends for Spain later, no one can guess, but clearly nothing favourable or agreeable to France.

The two great objects of Bismarck's policy are:

(1) The supremacy of Germany in Europe and of the German race in the world.

(2) The neutralization of the influence and power of the Latin race in France and elsewhere.

To obtain these objects he will go any lengths while he lives, so that we must be prepared for surprises in the future.

A change has come over the Emperor and his military advisers in regard to the evacuation of French territory, as you have seen by his speech on opening the German Parliament.

His Majesty is now prepared to withdraw his garrison as soon as the fifth and last milliard shall have been paid by Paris and received at Berlin.

So that if it is true that Thiers proposes to pay the fifth milliard in monthly instalments of 250,000,000 fs. beginning from the 1st of June, the evacuation might be expected in October and France be relieved of her nightmare.

This I look upon as a most desirable object. It appears to me that the re-establishment of the future balance of power in Europe on a general peace footing, is the thing Diplomacy should work for, and that nothing can be done so long as the Germans have not got their French gold, and the French got rid of their German soldiers.

The Germans, as you know, look upon the war of revenge as unavoidable and are making immense preparations for it.

Germany is in reality a great camp ready to break up for any war at a week's notice with a million of men.

We are out of favour with the Germans for preferring the old French alliance to a new German one, as our

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commercial policy is said to prove, and this impression has been lately confirmed by Thiers's *exposé des motifs*.[64]

[63] William I (1797 – 1888) was the German emperor from 1871, as well as king of Prussia from 1861.
[64] In French law, the "statement of reasons" is the part of a bill or a regulatory act, defining its purpose.

Thiers is again out of favour at Berlin, because the Russian Government has warned the German Government that Thiers is working to draw Russia into the Anglo-French Alliance contrary to their wishes. I believe myself that the alliance or understanding between Russia and Germany, Gortschakoff[65] and Bismarck is real, intimate, and sincere; and that they have agreed to preserve Austria so long as she obeys and serves them, but woe to Austria if ever she attempts to be independent!

Then the German and Slav elements she is composed of, will be made to gravitate towards their natural centres, leaving Hungary and her dependencies as a semi-oriental vassal of Germany and Russia. However, those are things of the future, at present I can think of nothing but the crisis at home and the deep regret I feel at losing my kind benefactor Lord Granville as a chief. My only consolation is that he will the sooner return to power as our Premier, for he is clearly the man of the future.

I hope you will write again occasionally.

Lord Lyons to Lord O. Russell.
Paris, April 8, 1873.

Many thanks for your most interesting letter of the 14th. I entirely agree with you that the one object of diplomacy should be to re-establish the balance of power in Europe on a peace footing. The payment of the indemnity and the departure of the German troops from France are of course necessary to the commencement of anything like a normal state of things. The French all more or less brood over the hope of vengeance, and the Germans give them credit for being even more bent upon revenge than they really are. So Germany keeps up an enormous army, and France strains every nerve to raise one; and what can diplomatists do?

In Germany they seem to attach a great deal more than due importance to the Commercial Treaty, as a sign of a

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tendency towards a renewal of the Anglo-French Alliance. But then the Germans have always been more angry with us for not helping to blot France out of Europe than the French have been with us for not helping them out of the scrape they got into by their own fault. Germans and French are to my mind alike unreasonable, but we only suffer the ordinary fate of neutrals.

Thiers professes to have no thought of forming any alliance at present; and to consider that it would be absurd of France to try for more at this moment than to ward off great questions, and live as harmoniously as she can with all Foreign Powers, without showing a preference to any. This is no doubt the wise and sensible policy. Thiers certainly acts upon it so far as England is concerned. Does he also act upon it as regards Russia? I cannot say. I think there is a little coquetry between him and the Russians.

[65] Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov (1798 – 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.

Lord Granville appears to have sent through the Duchesse de Galliera[66] a private message warning Thiers of the dangers of his advances to Russia; but the latter asserted that although the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg had been directed to maintain the most cordial relations with the Russian Government, matters had not gone further than that, and that he had made no communications which he should object to Germany knowing of. Thiers's tenure of power was, however, destined shortly to come to an end. On May 24, the veteran who had rendered such invaluable services to the country was defeated by a combination of opponents, and Marshal MacMahon[67] became President of the Republic in his stead. The change of Government was received quietly by the country; the elaborate precautions which had been taken in case of disorder proved superfluous, and the funds rose on the assumption that the Marshal was to prove to be the new saviour of society. MacMahon, who had

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reluctantly accepted the honour thrust upon him, was generally regarded as a French General Monck,[68] but which of the three pretenders was to be his Charles the Second remained a matter of complete uncertainty. The fickle crowd hastened to prostrate itself before the rising sun, and the first reception held by the new President at Versailles constituted a veritable triumph; swarms of people of all sorts attending, particularly those members of smart society who had long deserted the salons of the *Préfecture*. Amongst the throng were particularly noticeable the Duc d'Aumale and his brothers, wearing uniform and the red ribands which they had never been known to display before. All looked smooth and tranquil, as it usually did at the beginning; but the Government so far had not done anything beyond changing Prefects and Procureurs. The political situation, for the time being, might be summed up in the phrase that the French preferred to have at their head a man *qui monte à cheval*, rather than a man *qui monte à la tribune*.[69]

Although the dismissal of Thiers savoured of ingratitude, it was not altogether unfortunate for him that he had quitted office at that particular moment, for little doubt was felt that, with or without any error of policy on his own part, the country was gradually drifting towards communism. At any rate, he could compare with just pride the state in which he left France to the state in which he found her. Although the last German soldier had not yet left French soil, the credit of the liberation of the country was due to him, and by his financial operations, successful beyond all expectations, he had not only paid off four milliards, but provided the funds for discharging the fifth, and

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so admirably conducted the negotiations that the German Government was willing to withdraw the rest of the occupying force.

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[66] Maria Brignole Sale De Ferrari, Duchess of Galliera (1811 – 1888) was an Italian noblewoman and philanthropist.
[67] Marie Edme Patrice Maurice de MacMahon, marquis de MacMahon, duc de Magenta (1808 – 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. MacMahon 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.
[68] George Monck, 1st Duke of Albemarle was a prominent military figure under the Commonwealth, and his support was crucial to the Stuart Restoration of Charles II in 1660.
[69] A man who rides a horse rather than a man who mounts the podium to make a speech.

The fall of Thiers caused searchings of heart at Berlin, and a conversation with Count Arnim,[70] the German Ambassador at Paris, in June showed that the German Government regarded MacMahon with anything but favour. Arnim stated that displeasure had been felt at Berlin, both at language held by the Marshal before his appointment, and at his neglect in his former position to act with proper courtesy towards the Emperor's Ambassador in France. The German Government did not doubt that the remainder of the indemnity would be paid, but Thiers indulged less than other Frenchmen in hostile feelings towards Germany, and he and a few of the people about him seemed to be the only Frenchmen who could bring themselves to act with propriety and civility in their relations with Germans. In fact, Thiers's foreign policy had been wise and conciliatory, but as for his internal policy, he, Count Arnim, avowed that he entirely concurred in the opinion that it would have thrown the country in a short time into the hands of the Red Republicans.

The unfortunate Arnim was apparently at this time unconscious of his impending doom, although, as the following interesting letter from Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons shows, his fate had been sealed months before.

Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons
British Embassy, Berlin, Jan. 18, 1873.

> What I have to say to-day grieves me to the soul, because it goes against my excellent friend and landlord Harry Arnim.

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> Said friend, it is said, could not resist the temptation of turning an honest penny in the great War Indemnity Loan at Paris, and the Jewish Banker he employed, called Hanseman,[71] let it out to Bismarck, who could not understand how Arnim was rich enough to buy estates in Silesia and houses in Berlin.
>
> Now Bismarck, who is tired of Arnim, and thinks him a rising rival, will make use of this discovery with the Emperor whenever he wants to upset Arnim and send a new man to Paris.
>
> He thinks him a rising rival because Arnim went to Baden last autumn and advised the Emperor, behind Bismarck's back, to go in for an Orleanist Monarchy and drop Thiers, in opposition to Bismarck's policy, who wishes to drop all Pretenders and uphold Thiers as long as he lives.
>
> Besides which Arnim hinted at a readiness to take office at home if Bismarck came to grief.
>
> The Emperor is fond of Arnim and listened with complacency and told Bismarck when he returned from Varzin,—Bismarck has vowed revenge! I have not written all

[70] Harry Karl Kurt Eduard, Count von Arnim-Suckow (1824 – 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.

[71] David Justus Ludwig Hansemann (1790 – 1864) was a Prussian politician and banker, serving as the Prussian Minister of Finance in 1848.

> this home because it would serve no purpose yet,—but it may be useful to you as a peep behind the curtain. Meanwhile Bismarck has appointed one of his secret agents as Commercial Secretary to the Paris Embassy to watch Arnim. His name is Lindau[72] and as he is a very able man and an old friend of mine, I have given him a letter to you. He might become useful some day.
>
> Let me add in confidence that he corresponds privately and secretly with Bismarck behind Arnim's back.

It will be observed that the views expressed by Arnim to Lord Lyons in June are not altogether consistent with those attributed to him in the above letter, but Lord Odo Russell's opinion that his implacable chief would crush him at the first opportunity was only too well justified before long.

[72] Rudolf Lindau (1829 – 1910) was a German diplomat and author. He was employed in the service of Otto von Bismarck who was so impressed with Lindau's understanding of French politics and press that in 1879 he appointed him to the position of head of the German Foreign office's press bureau.

CHAPTER XI

MARSHAL MACMAHON'S PRESIDENCY. (1873-1875)

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The new French Government had been received with great favour by the upper classes, while the remainder of the population remained indifferent, but the Marshal was credited with the wish to place the Comte de Chambord on the throne, and the language of his entourage was strongly Legitimist, auguries being drawn from a frequent remark of the *Maréchale*, who was supposed to dislike her position: *nous ne sommes pas à notre place!*[73]

As the confused political situation began to clear, it became evident that everything depended upon the Comte de Chambord himself, and if he could be brought to adopt anything like a reasonable attitude, it was generally felt that there would be a large majority in his favour in the Assembly. The historic White Flag manifesto issued from Salzburg at the end of October effectually ruined the Legitimist cause.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Oct. 31, 1873.

> The Royalists were counting up new adhesions and expecting a letter from the Comte de Chambord which was to be read from the tribune at the last moment and rally

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> the waiters upon Providence and the waverers to them, when, to their utter consternation, the actual letter arrived, and fell like a shell with a violent explosion in the midst of them.
>
> I don't know what they are to do. All plans for making the Comte de Paris[74] or the Duc d'Aumale Regent will be voted against by the present Legitimists, unless the Comte de Chambord approves them. It is very doubtful whether any explanation could do away with the impression the letter will have produced throughout the country, which was already averse from the idea of the Legitimist King.
>
> The maintenance of MacMahon and the present Ministry seems the best mode of postponing trouble, but it cannot do much more than postpone.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 3, 1873.

> If the Chamber met to-morrow, I suppose it would vote the prolongation of MacMahon's powers; and though no one can answer for what a day or an hour may bring forth, I suppose this is what must be done. It is said that the Marshal himself insists upon a term of six years, if not ten. This is rather hard to understand, if, as I

[73] We are not in our place.
[74] Prince Philippe of Orléans, Count of Paris (1838 – 1894) was disputedly King of the French from 24 to 26 February 1848 as Louis Philippe II, although he was never officially proclaimed as such. He was the grandson of Louis Philippe I, King of the French. He was the Count of Paris as Orléanist claimant to the French throne from 1848 until his death.

believed, he really wished to be out of the thing, and I doubt its adding practically to the stability of his Government. On the other hand, the Conservatives want to have the prolongation voted in such a way as to make it apparent that MacMahon is their President. It would not suit them that he should be elected unanimously, or nearly so, as he perhaps might be. This would put him, they think, in a position too like that which Thiers held. The preposterous notion of making a Lieutenant General of the Kingdom to govern in the name of a King of full age and in possession of all his faculties, who would undoubtedly repudiate and denounce his representative, has been put an end to by the refusal of the Princes of Orleans, one and all, it is affirmed, to accept the post.

Thiers told me the day before yesterday that he did

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not intend to oppose the Government this session, and that we might count on a quiet winter. We shall see.

The Legitimists are furious with their King, as well they may be. How long this may last, one cannot say, but the numbers of those who adore him *quand même*[75], as a sort of fetish, have certainly fallen off.

MacMahon had been as much disappointed with the Chambord manifesto as the ultra-Legitimists themselves, and had looked forward to retiring from a position which he found distasteful; but as no king was available, and he was looked upon as the only guarantee for order, obviously the best course was to secure the prolongation of his powers for as long a period as possible. After many long and stormy discussions MacMahon was declared President of the Republic for seven years, and a committee of thirty was appointed to consider the Constitutional Laws. This result was so far satisfactory to the Right, that it enabled them to retire from the dangerous position in which they were placed by the attempt to put the Comte de Chambord on the throne, but it failed to establish a durable Government, and the whole period of MacMahon's Presidency was marked by a ceaseless struggle with his Republican opponents, which only terminated with his fall four years later.

The anxieties of French Ministers were, however, not confined to internal difficulties. Although the fact was concealed as much as possible, the anti-Ultramontane campaign of Bismarck created serious alarm in the beginning of 1874, and in that year may be said to have originated the long series of panics, well or ill founded, which have prevailed in France ever since. MacMahon in conversation did not scruple to express,

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his fear of a country which, according to him, could place 800,000 men on the Rhine in less than seventeen days, and made the interesting confession that the French military authorities

[75] Anyway.

had never credited the famous reports of Colonel Stoffel[76] as to Prussian military efficiency. The Foreign Minister, the Duc Décazes,[77] expressed the strongest apprehensions.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 17, 1874.

> The fall of France has never, I think, been brought so forcibly home to me, as when I listened yesterday to the humble deprecation which Décazes was obliged to make with regard to Bismarck's threats, in the same room in which I had so often heard the high language with which the Imperial Minister used to speak of the affairs of Europe. One can only hope that Odo may be right in thinking that Bismarck's menaces may subside, when he has carried his Army Bill at home. But may not his eagerness in his contest with the Ultramontanes[78] continue and carry him on to language and even to measures against France from which it may be difficult for him to draw back? and of course there is a limit to the submission of the French Government, however disastrous it may know the consequences of resistance to be. It is difficult to persecute any religion in these days, but it is impossible for the French Government to set itself in violent opposition to the predominant religion in France. I do not know what means we may have of getting pacific and moderate counsels listened to at Berlin, but I do not think the weakness of France a sufficient safeguard to other countries against the perils of the present state of things to the peace of Europe. It may be very easy to bully and to crush France, but will it be possible to do this without raising a storm in other quarters?

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What Bismarck wanted was that the French Government should attack the French bishops; and in order to conciliate him, a circular was issued by the Minister of the Interior remonstrating with them on the nature of the language in which their pastoral addresses were couched. The well-known clerical newspaper the *Univers* was suppressed, and although every effort was made to disguise the various acts of subserviency resorted to, it was perfectly well known to what cause they were due, and it was not surprising that the French writhed under the necessity of submitting to such dictation. In view of the military weakness of France, however, it was useless to think of resistance, the Duc d'Aumale, who commanded the most vulnerable district, having reported confidentially that there were neither fortresses nor an army which would have any chance of repelling a German invasion; added to which, owing to considerations of economy, the conscription was six months in arrear.

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[76] French Military Attaché at Berlin before the war of 1870 (LN). Eugène Georges Henri Céleste Stoffel (1821– 1907). In 1866, Stoffel was appointed Military Attaché at the French Embassy in Berlin. During his four-year tenure, he meticulously observed the reforms of the Prussian Army under Helmuth von Moltke.

[77] Louis-Charles-Élie-Amanien Decazes de Glücksbierg, 2nd Duke Decazes and 2nd Duke of Glücksbierg (1819 – 1886), was a French diplomat and statesman. Between 29 November 1873 and 23 November 1877, he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs in several monarchist governments of the Third Republic.

[78] Ultramontanism is a clerical-political conception within the Catholic Church that places strong emphasis on (and expresses loyalty to) the prerogatives and powers of the Pope in matters related to civil state governance. It contrasts with Gallicanism, the belief that popular civil authority—often represented by the monarch's or state's authority—over the Church is comparable to that of the Pope.

Lord Lyons to Lord Odo Russell.
Paris, Feb. 3, 1874.

The French want above all things to keep the peace, or, to put it otherwise, to escape being attacked by Germany in their present defenceless state. What, in your opinion, should they do? Of course the temptation to the unprincipled war party in Germany to attack them while they are unable to defend themselves, is very great; and that party must know that a war this year would be much less hazardous than one next year, and so on, as each year passes.

The next question I want your advice upon is what, if anything, can other Powers, and particularly England, do to help to preserve peace? This is a question peculiarly within your province, as the one thing to be considered in

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answering it, is the effect that anything we do may have at Berlin.

I am not very hopeful, but I think the chances of peace will be very much increased if we can tide over this year 1874.

I can see no consolation for a fresh war. I suppose Bismarck would be ready to buy the neutrality of Russia with Constantinople, and that France will give Russia anything even for a little help.

The Emperor Alexander[79] has told General Le Flô[80] at St. Petersburg that there will not be war. Do you attach much importance to this?

You will call this a questionnaire rather than a letter, but if you have anything to catechise me upon in return, I will answer to the best of my ability.

The Lyttons'[81] are, as you may suppose, a very great pleasure to me, and they have had a great success here.

No one was better fitted than Lord Odo Russell, who was a *persona grata* with Bismarck, to answer these queries. The Emperor Alexander had been very emphatic in assuring General Le Flô on several occasions that there would be no war, but Lord Odo was in all probability quite correct in his opinion that this was no real safeguard.

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[79] Alexander II (1818 – 1881) was Emperor of Russia, King of Poland, and Grand Duke of Finland from 2 March 1855 until his assassination on 13 March 1881. He is also known as Alexander the Liberator because of his historic Edict of Emancipation, which officially abolished Russian serfdom in 1861. He was succeeded by his son Alexander III.

[80] French Ambassador at St. Petersburg. (LN). Adolphe Charles Emmanuel Le Flô (1804 – 1887) was a French Army general, politician, and diplomat. An Orléanist, he served as the Third Republic's first Minister of War under Gambetta and Thiers

[81] Edward Robert Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Earl of Lytton (1831 – 1891) was a British statesman, Conservative politician and poet who used the pseudonym Owen Meredith. During his tenure as Viceroy of India between 1876 and 1880, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India. He served as British Ambassador to France from 1887 to 1891.

Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons.
Berlin, Feb. 20, 1874.

I was glad after a long interval to see your handwriting again, and doubly glad to find you inclined to renew our correspondence. You ask: Firstly, What in my opinion should the French do to escape being attacked by Germany in their present defenceless state?

In my opinion nothing can save them if Bismarck is determined to fight them again; but then, is it France or is it Austria he is preparing to annihilate? In Bismarck's

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opinion, France, to avoid a conflict with him, should gag her press, imprison her bishops, quarrel with Rome, refrain from making an army or from seeking alliances with other Powers all out of deference to Germany.

Secondly. What can other Powers, and particularly England, do to help to preserve peace?

A Coalition is impossible; advice or interference adds to Bismarck's excuses for going to war, so the only course Governments can follow is to let him do as he pleases and submit to the consequences, until he dies.

Thirdly. Do I attach any importance to the Emperor of Russia's pacific assurances?

None whatever, because Bismarck is prepared to buy his co-operation with anything he pleases in the East.

Bismarck is now master of the situation at home and abroad. The Emperor, the Ministers, the Army, the Press, and the National majority in Parliament are instruments in his hands, whilst abroad he can so bribe the great Powers as to prevent a coalition and make them subservient to his policy. Now, his policy, as you know, is to mediatize the minor States of Germany and to annex the German Provinces of Austria, so as to make one great centralized Power of the German-speaking portions of Europe. To accomplish this he may require another war, but it may be with Austria and not with France, which he now puts forward to keep up the war spirit of the Germans and to remind Europe of his powers. Besides which he has to pass the unpopular Army Bill and War Budget which he failed in last summer.

His anti-Roman policy will serve him to pick a quarrel with any Power he pleases by declaring that he has discovered an anti-German conspiracy among the clergy of the country he wishes to fight.

Such is the situation, but it does not follow that we shall have war before another year or two are over or more, nor need we have war if Bismarck can carry out his plans without it.

At present the tone of Bismarck and Bülow[82] is quite pacific, and I notice a great desire for the co-operation of England in maintaining the peace of Europe generally.

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Lord Lyons's own opinions were in exact agreement with Lord Odo Russell's, and the general uncertainty as to Bismarck's intentions continued to preoccupy both the French and the English Governments, although the Emperor of Russia persisted in assuring General Le Flô that there would be no war, and it was assumed in some quarters that the German Emperor disapproved of the Bismarckian policy.

The general election in England at the beginning of 1874, resulting in the return of the Conservative party to power, placed Lord Derby again at the Foreign Office in the room of Lord Granville, and the long letter which follows was presumably intended to enlighten him on the subject of French politics generally. It is, at all events, a concise review of the situation.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Feb. 24, 1874.

I thank you cordially for your letter of yesterday, and I resume with very peculiar satisfaction my diplomatic correspondence with you. I wish the subject of it was as pleasant to me as is the fact of its renewal; but I cannot help being more than usually anxious about the prospects of Europe and of France in particular. This spring and summer are the especially critical seasons for France. She will be for a long time to come far too weak to indulge in aggression, except indeed as a secondary ally of some stronger Power, but even next year, she will not be in the absolutely helpless condition which is at this moment so strong a temptation to national hatreds, and to the military thirst for gold and glory which prevails with a party in Germany. I am afraid the peace of Europe depends entirely upon the view Bismarck may take of the easiest means of bringing all German-speaking nations under one

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rule. The wolf can always find reasons for quarrelling with the lamb, and as Bismarck himself told Odo Russell, he has had a good deal of experience of this kind of thing. The French lamb will not be skittish, and indeed will hardly venture to bleat, for some time. For my own part, I am constantly on the watch to forestall questions which may make difficulties between France and any other country; for if Bismarck wants war, it would suit him to be able to appear to be only taking his part in a quarrel already made.

Italy is the most dangerous neighbour from this point of view, and the presence of the *Orénoque* at Civita Vecchia[83] is the ticklish point. It is a very delicate matter to touch; for if the question came very prominently into notice, it might raise one of the

[82] Bernhard Ernst von Bülow (1815 – 1879) was a Danish and German statesman. He was the father of Bernhard Heinrich Karl Martin, Prince of Bülow (1849 – 1929) who was a German politician serving as the imperial chancellor of the German Empire and minister-president of Prussia from 1900 to 1909.
[83] The *Orénoque* (Orinoco) was a French naval vessel. After the proclamation of the Third Republic, *L'Orenoque* departed Toulon on October 30th 1870 with 267 men. The vessel sailed for Civitavecchia, a city and major sea port on the Tyrrhenian Sea 60 kilometres (37 miles) west-northwest of Rome, where she stayed until 1874.

storms in the press of all countries, which are so often the precursors of evil times. The ship is supposed to be at Civita Vecchia to give the Pope the means of leaving Italy, if he wishes to do so; and I suppose the Vatican might relieve the French of embarrassment by saying that she is not wanted. In fact, if the Italian Government intended to prevent the Pope's going away, they would of course stop him before he got to Civita Vecchia, and if they abstained (as would no doubt be the case) from interfering with his movements, he could get a ship to depart in, whenever he pleased.

I do not know that there is any ill-feeling in Switzerland towards France, but the Ultramontane disputes give Bismarck a lever to work with.

I believe the French Government have completely drawn in their horns about the Armenian Patriarch question and the Protectorate of the Latin Christians in the East, since Bismarck appeared on the field at Constantinople.

In looking out for small beginnings of troubles, I have thought of Tunis.[84] I suppose we may lay aside all apprehension of attempts of France to change the frontier or to bring the Regency into more complete dependency upon her, at the present moment. I find by a despatch from Mr. Wood,[85] that the German commodore, in his conversation with the Bey, insisted particularly upon the interests of German subjects being put upon as good a footing as those of the subjects of any other country.

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I think Décazes takes the humiliating position in which France, and he as her Foreign Minister, are placed, with more equanimity and temper than most Frenchmen would; and so long as the present, or any other Government, not absolutely unreasonable, is at the head of affairs, France will be prudent in her foreign relations.

Of Marshal MacMahon's seven years' lease of power, only three months have elapsed; a time too short to give much foundation for conjecture as to its probable duration. Both he himself and his Ministers take opportunities of declaring that its continuance is above discussion, and that they will maintain it against all comers. There are two things against it. First, the extreme difficulty of giving it anything like the appearance of permanence and stability which would rally to it that great majority of Frenchmen who are ready at all times to worship the powers that be, if only they look as if they were likely to continue to be. Secondly, there is the character of the Marshal himself. He is honest and a brave soldier, but he does not take such a part in

[84] Initially, Italy was the country that demonstrated the most desire to have Tunisia as a colony having investment, citizens and geographic proximity as motivation. However, Britain and France co-operated to prevent this during the years 1871 – 1878 ending in Britain supporting French influence in Tunisia in exchange for dominion over Cyprus.

[85] Sir Richard Wood (1806 – 1900) was a British dragoman and consul in Constantinople, Damascus, and Tunis. His career spanned more than forty years of the Eastern question period, when the Ottoman Empire was in decline and the British were gaining power in the Middle East and North Africa. He was a key figure in Anglo-Ottoman co-operation between the 1830s and the 1870s. 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.

affairs as would increase his personal prestige. The danger, in fact, is that by degrees he may come to be looked upon as a *nullité*![86]

The Imperialists are agitating themselves and spending money, as if they were meditating an immediate coup. The wiser heads counsel patience, but the old horses, who sorely miss the pampering they had under the Empire, are getting very hungry, and are afraid that they themselves may die before the grass has grown.

The fear of an Imperialist attempt has in some degree brought back to the Government the support of the Legitimists, and in fact the Comte de Chambord has quarrelled with his own party. The Fusion has put an end to the Orleanist Party, as a party for placing the Comte de Paris on the throne; but the question of appointing the Duc d'Aumale Vice-President, in order to have some one ready to succeed MacMahon in case of need, is seriously considered. I suppose, however, that MacMahon would look upon this as destructive of the arrangements between him and the Assembly. And then the whole system depends upon the maintenance by hook or by crook of

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a majority, which has not yet ceased to melt away, as seats become vacant and new elections take place.

The Duc de Bisaccia,[87] the new French Ambassador in London, even at his first interview with Lord Derby, did not scruple to avow that he felt quite certain that the Republican form of government would not last, and he went on to assert that Bismarck's head had been turned by success, and that he aimed at nothing less than the conquest of Europe, being quite indifferent either to the views of his Imperial Master, or of the Crown Prince. Whatever the prospects of the Republic, the prospects of Bisaccia's own party (Legitimist) were indisputably gloomy, for the prevailing sentiment in France at the time was hostility to the White Flag and to the clerical and aristocratic influences of which it was held to be the emblem. The great majority of the people were Republican, and the most numerous party after the Republican was the Imperial, but the Presidency of Marshal MacMahon was acquiesced in, for the moment, by all parties, because it was believed to be capable of preserving order, because it left the question of the definitive government of the country still undecided, and because no party saw its way to securing the predominance of its own ideas.

The existing state of things was accounted for by the history of the establishment of the seven-years Presidency.

When the Orleans Princes tendered their allegiance to the Comte de Chambord in the previous autumn, the fusion, so long talked of, was complete, and it was supposed that a Parliamentary Monarchy with the Tricolour Flag, might be established under

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the legitimate head of the Bourbons; but the Comte de Chambord struck a fatal blow to these hopes by his celebrated letter, and the Conservatives felt that there was no time to be lost in

[86] Nonentity,

[87] Charles Gabriel Marie Sosthène II de La Rochefoucauld (1825 – 1908), 4th Duke of Doudeauville, 1st Duke of Bisaccia, Grandee of Spain, was a French politician during the Third Republic who served as Deputy for Sarthe from 1871 to 1898 and French Ambassador to London from 1873 to 1874. He became the leader of the Legitimist Right.

setting up a Government having some sort of stability. The plan which they adopted was that of conferring power upon Marshal MacMahon for a fixed and long period. Had a short period been proposed, it would have been agreed to almost unanimously; but this was not their object. They wished it to be apparent to the country that the Marshal was specially the President of the Conservative majority: they asked for a term of ten years: obtained seven, and secured from the Marshal a declaration of adherence to their views. The slight modification of the Ministry which ensued, resulted in placing the Government more completely in the hands of the party pledged to a monarchical form of Government, and the Ministry thus reconstituted, set itself to the task of resisting the progress of Radicalism and Communism in the country.

But the suspicion of favouring the White Flag clung to the Government, and although the latter, following the example of the Empire, had installed their partisans in office, as mayors, etc., by thousands throughout the country, the candidates supported by the Government had, in almost every instance, found themselves at the bottom of the poll when elections took place; and the results showed that a large accession of votes had been received by the Republican and Imperialist parties. Of these the former had gained most, but the latter possessed a backing in the country which was inadequately represented by their numbers in the Assembly.

It should, however, be added that there did not

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appear on any side a disposition to embarrass the Government by factious or bitter opposition with regard to the three departments, Finance, War, and Foreign Affairs, in which the practical interests of the country were most deeply involved. The financial policy of M. Magne[88] was generally supported; and with regard to votes for the Army and Navy, the Government had rather to resist a pressure to increase the expenditure on these heads, than to urge the necessity of considerable supplies.

In the conduct of foreign affairs, the defenceless state of France had made the avoidance of an attack from Germany the one overwhelming care of the Government. To effect this object, to give Germany no pretext for a quarrel, and to make submission to the behests of Bismarck as little galling and in appearance as little humiliating as possible, had been the constant occupation of the Foreign Minister. In this effort he was seconded by the Assembly, and indeed every one in and out of that body, except a few clerical and Legitimist bigots, felt it to be a patriotic duty to abstain from embarrassing the Government in its relations with foreign Powers. Another reassuring feature in the situation was, that there were no symptoms of attempts to resist by force the authority of the Assembly, as no party seemed likely to venture to oppose by force a Government which disposed of the army; and the army in 1874 showed no prediction for any particular candidate for the throne sufficiently strong to overcome its habitual obedience to the Constitutional Government, whatever that Government might be.

[88] Finance Minister (LN). Pierre Magne (1806 – 1879) was a lawyer and French politician. He was a member of parliament from 1843 to 1848, a senator in the Second French Empire, and a representative and then senator in the French Third Republic. He was Minister of Finance several times.

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As an instance of the dictation practised by Bismarck towards France in foreign affairs, it may be mentioned[89] that in January 1874, Count Arnim formally announced to the Duc Décazes that the German Government would not tolerate the assumption by France of the suzerainty of Tunis, or of a Protectorate over that country. To this Décazes humbly replied that there had never been the least question of anything of the kind—a statement which can scarcely be described as accurate.

Whether Bismarck entertained any designs with regard to Tunis is not known, but it was in this year that Germany began to show some signs of interest in the Philippines and other places supposed to be of some colonial value. The following extract from a letter written on the subject by the late Lord Lytton, who was at the time Secretary of Embassy at Paris, is a striking instance of rare and remarkable political prescience.

Lord Lytton to Lord Lyons.
Paris, Oct. 27, 1874.

> Odo's impression (communicated to you) that Bismarck does not want colonies rather surprises me. It seems to me a perfectly natural and quite inevitable ambition on the part of a Power so strong as Germany not to remain an inland state a moment longer than it can help, but to get to the sea, and to extend its seaboard in all possible directions. Is there any case on record of an inland state suddenly attaining to the military supremacy of Europe without endeavouring by means of its military strength and prestige to develop its maritime power? But you can't be a Maritime Power without colonies, for if you have ships you must have places to send them to, work for them

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> to do, and a marine *Exercier-Platz*[90] for training seamen. That is why I have always thought that the English school of politicians which advocates getting rid of our colonies as profitless encumbrances, ought (to be consistent) to advocate the simultaneous suppression of our navy. Lord Derby says that though Germany may probably cherish such an ambition, she will have as much seaboard as she can practically want as long as she retains possession of the Duchies. But that is not a very convenient commercial seaboard, and I confess I can't help doubting the absence of all desire for more and better outlets to the sea, so long as her military power and prestige remain unbroken. Anyhow, there seems to be now a pretty general instinct throughout Europe, and even in America, that a policy of maritime and colonial development must be the natural result of Germany's present position: and such instincts, being those of self-preservation, are generally, I think, what Dizzy[91] calls "unerring" ones.

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[89] Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, Jan. 16, 1874.
[90] Literally a drill square but on a ship less apposite.
[91] Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804 – 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.

A letter from Lord Odo Russell written about this period throws a curious light upon Bismarck's imaginary grievances, and the difficulties which he was prepared to raise upon the slightest provocation. Probably no Minister of modern times ever uttered so many complaints, threatened so often to resign, and yet wielded such absolute power.

Lord O. Russell to Lord Derby.
Berlin, Nov. 9, 1874.

I found Prince Bismarck in one of his confidential moods the other day, and he indulged me in a long talk about his own interests, past, present, and prospective.

Among many other things, he said that his life had been strangely divided into phases or periods of twelve years each.

Born in 1815, he had left home when he was twelve years old to begin his studies. At 24 he

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inherited his small patrimony and his father's debts, and entered upon the life and duties of a country gentleman. At 36 (1851) his diplomatic career began, and he was sent to Frankfort, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris. At 48 (1863) he was recalled to form the present Administration, which in twelve years had carried on three wars and made the German Empire. He was now 60 and worn out with the responsibilities and anxieties of office, and he was resolved to enter upon a new phase (of 12 years he hoped) by resigning and retiring into private life—a resolution he begged I would keep to myself for the present.

I said I could well understand his wish for rest, but I did not believe the Emperor or the country would allow him to indulge in it, as he was well enough and strong enough to govern Germany for many years to come.

He replied that he felt quite strong enough to govern Germany, but not to be governed himself any longer by the Emperor, whose obstinacy and narrow mindedness were more than he could bear.

I said I had often heard him complain of his Court duties before, but it appeared to me that he always carried his points, and that after some resistance the Emperor gave way in the end and followed his advice.

He replied that it was that very struggle with his Imperial Master that had worn him out and that he no longer felt strong enough to carry on after sixty. He then related to me a series of very curious anecdotes illustrating his struggles with the Crown, and what he called the want of confidence and ingratitude of the Emperor.

I asked him whether anything had lately occurred calculated to increase his wish for rest.

He said that his present difference with the Emperor related to the new army organization. The Emperor and his generals thought the sole object of the German Empire was to turn the nation into an army for the greater glory of the House of

Hohenzollern; whilst he held that there must be some limit to the heavy strain of military obligations the Crown was ever anxious to impose on the people.

I asked whether he was alluding to the Landsturm Bill, which placed every German from the age of 16 to 42 at the disposal of the War Department.

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He replied that he did not exactly allude to that, but there were other measures in contemplation, elaborated in the Emperor's military Cabinet, he could not give his sanction to, and which would consequently lead to another painful struggle. He considered that his great task had been completed in 1870 to 1872, and that he could now retire and leave the internal organization of Germany to other hands. The Crown Prince, he thought, might possibly govern on more Constitutional principles than his father, who, born in the last century, had not yet been able to realize what the duties of a Constitutional Sovereign were, and thought himself as King of Prussia above the Constitution, as the Emperor Sigismund[92] thought himself above grammar when he wrote bad Latin. A danger to which the Crown Prince would be exposed as Sovereign was his love for intrigue and backstairs influence—"some one or other always concealed behind the door or curtain." The Prince was not as straightforward as he appeared, and he suffered from the weakness of obstinacy and the obstinacy of weakness due to unbounded conceit and self-confidence—but at the same time he meant well.

After a good deal more talk about his family, his property, and his longing for country life and pursuits, we parted.

Without attaching undue importance to Prince Bismarck's oft-repeated threat of resignation, I do not suppose he would go out of his way to tell me and others so, without intention. My impression is that he wants to obtain something or other from the Emperor which he can make conditional on remaining in office, well knowing that His Majesty cannot do without him. Besides which, his retirement from office would have the appearance of a defeat, consequent on his failure to coerce the Pope and his legions. He is not the man to admit a defeat while he lives. Time will show what more he wants to satisfy his gigantic ambition.

The fear of war with Germany had died away temporarily in the summer, and the various political

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parties in France were free to continue their struggles and to reduce the situation to almost unexampled confusion. The motives of the Comte de Chambord and his followers were too remote for ordinary human understanding, and their object appeared to be to bring about a crisis and a dissolution of the Assembly on the most disadvantageous terms to themselves. Moderate Republicans were looking to the Duc d'Aumale as a safeguard against the Imperialists on the one hand, and the Reds on the other. Republicans of various shades, and

[92] Sigismund of Luxembourg was Holy Roman Emperor from 1433 until his death in 1437. As the husband of Mary, Queen of Hungary, he was King of Hungary and Croatia from 1387. He was elected King of Germany in 1410, and was also King of Bohemia from 1419, as well as prince-elector of Brandenburg.

the Reds in particular, were coquetting with Prince Napoleon, and he with them. Most men and most parties appeared to have particular objects, which they hated with a hatred more intense than their love for the object of their affections. Thiers, it was believed, would have rather seen anything, even a restoration of the Empire, than have the Duc de Broglie and the Orleanists in power. Notwithstanding the fusion, the Legitimists would have probably preferred Gambetta[93] (or some one still more extreme) than an Orleans Prince—and so on.
"I cannot make head or tail of French internal politics," Lord Derby wrote, at the end of the year, "and presume that most Frenchmen are in the same condition. It looks as if nobody could see their way till the present Assembly is dissolved and a new one elected."

The beginning of the new year was signalized in Paris by the appearance of the Lord Mayor of London,[94] who had been invited to attend the opening of the new Opera House. That functionary has always been invested in French popular opinion with semi-fabulous attributes, and he seems to have risen to the level of the occasion. "The

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Lord Mayor," wrote the unimpressionable Lord Lyons, "is astonishing the Parisians with his sword, mace, trumpeters, and State coaches. So far, however, I think the disposition here is to be pleased with it all, and I keep no countenance and do what I have to do with becoming gravity." A little later, however, he was constrained to add:—

> "I am afraid the Lord Mayor's head has been turned by the fuss which was made with him here, for he seems to have made a very foolish speech on his return to England. Strange to say the Parisians continued to be amused and pleased with his pomps and vanities to the end, although the narrow limits between the sublime and the ridiculous were always on the point of being over passed. I abstained from going to the banquets given to him, or by him, except a private dinner at the Elysée; but I had him to dinner here, and, I think, sent him away pleased with the Embassy, which it is always as well to do, and if so, I have reaped the reward of my diplomatic command over my risible muscles."

It was not perhaps surprising that the Lord Mayor should have been thrown off his intellectual balance, for the honours accorded to him far surpassed those paid to ordinary mortals and resembled rather those habitually reserved for crowned heads. When he visited the opera the ex-Imperial box was reserved for his use; the audience rose at his entry, and the orchestra played the English National Anthem. Twice he dined with the President of the Republic; the Prefect of the Seine gave a banquet in his honour; so did the authorities at Boulogne; and to crown all, the Tribunal of Commerce struck a medal in commemoration of his visit.

The one thing that was fairly clear in French politics, besides abhorrence of the White Flag,

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was the gradual progress of Bonapartism which was beginning to frighten Conservatives as well as Republicans, and the Bonapartists themselves were inclined to regret having helped to turn Thiers out of office, because the army was becoming more and more anti-Republican,

[93] Léon Gambetta (1838 – 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.
[94] Alderman David Henry Stone (1812 - 26 February 1890) was appointed Lord Mayor in 1874.

and it would be much easier to turn it against a civilian than against its natural head, a Marshal of France.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Jan. 26, 1875.

> Bonapartism is still in the ascendant, and certainly the Assembly is doing everything to give weight to the assertion that France is unfit for Parliamentary Government. No one believes in a moderate Republic, as a self-supporting institution unconnected with some particular individual. The "Conservative Republic" was devised for M. Thiers. The Septennate Republic, if it be a Republic, would be scouted if MacMahon were not at the head of it. The Comte de Chambord is impossible. The Orleanists have cast in their lot with his, and besides, the Government they represent being constitutional or Parliamentary, is exactly what is most out of favour, with the exception of the White Flag. As I have said all along, the dispute is between a very advanced Republic and the Empire, and *confugiendum est ad imperium*[95] is becoming more and more the cry of those who dread Communism. Those who have personal reasons for fearing the Empire are already taking their precautions. Friends of the Orleans Princes are believed to have seriously conferred (not with the knowledge or consent of the Princes themselves, so far as I have heard) with the Bonaparte leaders, in order to ascertain what the Orleans family would have to expect if the Prince Imperial returned. At any rate the Bonapartist papers have been insinuating that they would be allowed to stay in France and keep their property; and these insinuations are of course intended to relieve tender Orleanist consciences of scruples in coming round to the Imperial cause.

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> The officers in the army are becoming more and more averse from all idea of a permanent Republic. They would willingly wait to the end of MacMahon's time, but they are beginning to talk of the possibility of his being so much disgusted by the way in which he is worried by the Assembly, as to throw the Presidency up.
>
> In short France is at this moment in a fear of Bonapartism. It may, and very probably will, subside this time, but it differs from most intermittent fevers in this, that the attacks recur at shorter and shorter intervals, and increase instead of diminish in intensity.

Fear of the Imperialists drove Conservatives into voting with Gambetta and other advanced Republicans; a ministerial crisis took place; the Assembly gave contradictory decisions and generally discredited itself, and the confusion grew so great that it seemed impossible to unravel it.

> "I have spent three afternoons at Versailles," wrote Lord Lyons on February 26th, "and have seen a Constitution made there. I have seen also such a confusion of parties and principles as I hope never to witness again. I found Décazes, Broglie, and

[95] Resort must be had to the imperial power. The AI programme *Google Gemini* found this in Tacitus' *Histories* (Book 2, Chapter 77) in a pivotal speech by Mucianus, the governor of Syria. He was trying to persuade Vespasian to claim the throne during the "Year of the Four Emperors" (69 AD). His only "refuge" or "safety" was to seize the supreme power himself. If he doesn't become the emperor, he will likely be executed as a potential usurper."

> a great number of Right Centre deputies at the MacMahons' last evening. They all, and particularly Décazes, looked to me very unhappy, and indeed they did not affect to be at all satisfied with the occurrences in the Assembly. Like the horse in the fable who invited the man to get on his back, the Right Centre have let the Left get on their backs to attack Bonapartism, and don't know how to shake them off again."

The ceaseless struggles between the various political parties in France, which were of little interest to the outside world, were temporarily interrupted in the spring of 1875 by the war scare which so greatly agitated Europe at the time, but

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which subsequently became an almost annual phenomenon. Unfortunately, Lord Lyons was in England during the greater portion of this critical period, and there are wanting, consequently, documents which might have thrown light upon what has always been a somewhat mysterious episode, but it would appear that the symptoms of alarm on the part of the French first showed themselves about March 11. On that day the Duc Décazes drew the attention of the British Ambassador to three incidents which ought to engage the serious attention of those Governments who were desirous of maintaining peace in Europe. These were the threatening representation made by the German Minister at Brussels to the Belgian Government respecting the language and conduct of the Ultramontane Party in that country; the pointed communication to the French Government of this representation; and the prohibition of the export of horses from Germany. Prince Bismarck, said Décazes, seemed to become more and more inclined to revive old grievances and to require of foreign countries the exercise of an unreasonable and impossible control over the prelates and even over the lay members of the Roman Catholic Church, and as for the decree forbidding the export of horses, it was so inexplicable that it could only add to uneasiness. It might be easy for England, and for some other nations, to regard these things calmly, but to France they constituted a serious and immediate peril. In spite of the steps taken during the past year to conciliate Germany on the subject of the Bishop's charges, the German Government had never officially intimated that it considered the question to be closed, and Count Arnim had used the significant expression

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to him, that it was only closed "so far as any question between you and us can ever be looked upon as closed." He believed that it was only owing to the influence of other Powers, and of England in particular, that the danger had been averted in 1874; and he now hoped that the same influence would be exerted in the same way. Décazes added a somewhat surprising piece of information which had been imparted to him in January, 1874, by Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador, *viz*. that in that month an order to occupy Nancy had absolutely been issued by the German Government to its troops, and that there were strong grounds for believing that this order has been rescinded chiefly owing to influence exerted at Berlin by Russia. So far as is known, there is no corroboration of this story, and it would appear that Prince Orloff was so anxious to convince France of the goodwill of Russia that he thought it advisable to drag England into the question, but it was not surprising that France should be sensitively alive to the danger she incurred, if Bismarck, irritated by his Ultramontane difficulties, should choose to throw the blame upon the Roman Catholics of other countries, or should resort to quarrels with foreign nations as a means of diverting public opinion in Germany from inconvenient questions at home.

Prince Hohenlohe, the new German Ambassador, who also saw Lord Lyons on the same day, volunteered no opinion upon the representation to Belgium which had excited so much perturbation, but remarked with regard to the exportation of horses that the "agriculturists might have been alarmed by the prospect of a drain of horses for foreign countries. He had no reason to suppose that purchases

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of horses had been made in Germany by the French Government for military purposes; but he had heard that a considerable number had lately been brought there for the Paris fiacres."[96]

It will not have escaped notice that the German Government—or rather Bismarck—was fortunate in always having excellent reasons available, either for not complying with inconvenient requests, or for explaining away disquieting symptoms; thus, in 1870, the insuperable difficulty to disarmament was the King of Prussia; during the peace negotiations, all harsh conditions were due to les militaires, and in 1875 the German agriculturists and the Paris cabs were responsible for any uneasiness that might be felt temporarily.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, March 16, 1875.

I saw Décazes last night and found him in a greater state of alarm about the intentions of Germany than anything specific he told me seemed to warrant. The retirement of Bismarck to Varzin will not reassure the French, because they remember that he was there when the war broke out in 1870.

There is observable here, and not least among the Russians, a sort of impression that there is to be a movement of some kind in the East.

In short, there is a great deal of vague uneasiness and fear that peace is in danger.

The German Embassy here has certainly been taking great pains to put it about that the prohibition to export horses has been decreed solely from economical, and not from military motives. That Embassy keeps up very close relations with the *Times* correspondent[97] here, and his subordinates. Of course the trouble it has taken has increased instead of allaying alarm.

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Décazes constantly harps on the string of the influence of England at Berlin, and the consolation it affords him to feel sure that it is exercised quietly on the side of peace. The position is a painful one. Without particular friendships and alliances, France is

[96] A fiacre is a form of hackney coach, a horse-drawn four-wheeled carriage for hire. The name is derived indirectly from Saint Fiacre; the Hôtel de Saint Fiacre in Paris rented carriages from about the middle of the seventeenth century. Saint Fiacre was adopted as the cab drivers' patron saint because of the association of his name with the carriage.

[97] Blowitz (LN). Henri Georges Stephane Adolphe Opper de Blowitz (1825 – 1903), previously Heinrich Opper and also known as Heinrich Opper von Blowitz, was a Bohemian journalist. He became a French citizen at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. Blowitz became chief Paris correspondent of the *Times* in 1973 after serving as assistant. In this role he became famous, both as a journalist and for his insights into diplomacy.

absolutely at the mercy of Germany, and if she tries to form such friendships and alliances, she may bring the wrath of the great Chancellor down upon her instantly.

Lord Derby to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, March 16, 1875.

I do not know and cannot conjecture the cause of Décazes's anxiety. Nothing has passed or is passing in any part of Europe to justify alarm as to an early disturbance of general peace. But I hear of a similar feeling of uneasiness at Berlin; and the Russian Government is credited with designs as to the nature of which no two persons agree. Until we hear more, I shall be inclined to set down all these rumours of wars to the time of year, and to the absence of any exciting questions (so far as foreign relations are concerned) to occupy men's minds.

I may tell you confidentially that Bismarck has given us through Odo Russell a serious warning against the unfriendly feelings of the Russian Government towards England. He may be only trying to stir up jealousy, a game which he often plays, or he may be sincere. I take his hint as one not to be slighted, yet not infallibly trusted. Gortschakoff is no doubt much disgusted about the Conference; the Czar also to some extent; and probably they both feel that they had miscalculated the effect of the Russian marriage on English policy. But beyond this I know no cause of quarrel. Dead calm for the moment. I cannot conceive any reason why you should not take your leave when you wish it. Paris is always within reach if anything new turns up.

It is obvious from the above that neither Lord Derby nor Lord Lyons felt any very serious apprehensions, and the latter was permitted to go home on

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leave at the beginning of April. On April 10, Lord Odo Russell wrote to Lord Derby:—

Lord Odo Russell to Lord Derby
Berlin 10 April 1875

Bismarck is at his old tricks again—alarming the Germans through the officious Press, and intimating that the French are going to attack them, and that Austria and Italy are conspiring in favour of the Pope, *etc.* Now he has succeeded in making the Emperor and the Crown Prince believe that France is meditating an invasion of Germany through Belgium! And, not knowing any better, they are in despair and have ordered the War Department to make ready for defence. This crisis will blow over like so many others, but Bismarck's sensational policy is very wearisome at times. Half the Diplomatic Body have been here since yesterday to tell me that war was imminent, and when I seek to calm their nerves and disprove their anticipations, they think that I am thoroughly bamboozled by Bismarck.

In the middle of April there appeared in the Berlin Post the celebrated article entitled: *Is War in Sight?* and as it was well known that such articles were not written except under official inspiration, something akin to a real panic took place, more especially when other German

papers began to write in a similar strain. Letters from Mr. Adams,[98] who had been left as *Chargé d'Affaires* at Paris, show the pitiable condition of terror to which the French Government was reduced, and the efforts made by Décazes to obtain British support. Décazes urged that England ought to take an active part in protesting against the new theory that one nation was justified in falling upon another for no other reason than that the latter might possibly prove troublesome in the future. He said that he had protested to the German Ambassador against the attitude of the German Government, after all the assurances that it had received from the French Government, and

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added that if war took place in August, as he feared, he should advise MacMahon to retire with his army beyond the Loire without firing a shot and wait there "until the justice of Europe should speak out in favour of France." The idea of openly identifying England with the French cause did not commend itself apparently to Mr. Disraeli.[99]

> "I had a rather long conversation about French politics with Mr. Disraeli," Lord Lyons wrote to Mr. Adams on April 21st, "and I found him thoroughly well up in the subject. He wishes to encourage confidence and goodwill on the part of France towards England, but sees the danger to France herself of any such appearance of a special and separate understanding as would arouse the jealousy of Bismarck."
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> **********
>
> "With a little variation in the illustrations, Décazes's language to you was just what he used to me before I left Paris. Germany can, I suppose, overrun France whenever she pleases, a fortnight after she determines to do so; and no one can tell how suddenly she may come to this determination. Whether Décazes is wise in perpetually crying "wolf" I cannot say. He is naturally anxious to keep Europe on the alert, but I am not sure that the repetition of these cries does not produce the contrary effect."

During the second half of April the tension began to diminish, but Lord Odo Russell, who was certainly no alarmist, felt convinced that, so long as Bismarck remained in office, the peace of Europe was in jeopardy, for his power had now become absolute, and neither the Emperor nor the Crown Prince were capable of withstanding him. Writing on April 24, he remarks: "The prospect of another war fills me with horror and disgust, and if Bismarck lives a few years longer I do not see how it can be prevented. The Emperor's

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powers of resistance are over; he does what Bismarck wishes, and the Crown Prince, peace-loving as he is, has not sufficient independence of character to resist Bismarck's all-powerful mind and will.'

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[98] Sir Francis Ottiwell Adams, (1825–1889) was a British diplomat who served in Japan and Switzerland. Adams served as Secretary of the British Legation in Japan from 1868 to 1872 and as British Ambassador in Switzerland from 1881 to 1888. As Ambassador in Switzerland, he was among the signatories of the Bern Convention of 1886.

[99] Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804 – 1881). (*See footnote on page 61*)

A few days later the Belgian Minister at Berlin reported to Lord Odo Russell an alarming communication made to him by Count Moltke.[100]

Lord O. Russell to Lord Derby.
Berlin, May 1, 1875.

> Since writing to you to-day, at this late hour my Belgian colleague Baron Nothomb[101] has called to tell me that he had a long conversation with Moltke yesterday fully confirming what is said in my despatch. Moltke added that, much as he hated war, he did not see how Germany could avoid it next year, unless the Great Powers 'coalesced' to persuade France to reduce her armaments to a reasonable peace establishment.
>
> Then Nothomb told me that Bismarck had sent Bülow to him with the following confidential message: "Tell your King to get his army ready for defence, because Belgium may be invaded by France sooner than we expect."
>
> This message Nothomb writes to Brussels to-day. He is under an impression that in the event of war, Bismarck intends to occupy Belgium, as Frederick the Great[102] occupied Saxony when he suspected Maria Theresa[103] of wanting to take her revenge for the loss of Silesia. This is curious, and you will probably hear more about it from Brussels. I write in haste for the Messenger.

The evident desire of Bismarck to fasten a quarrel upon France aroused the indignation of Lord Derby, who realized that the intervention of Russia was the best method of preventing it.

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[100] Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (1800 – 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.

[101] Jean-Baptiste, Baron Nothomb (1805 – 1881) was a Belgian statesman and diplomat, who served as the prime minister of Belgium from 1841 to 1845 and had a number of diplomatic appointments thereafter.

[102] Frederick II (1712 – 1786) was the monarch of Prussia from 1740 until his death. He declared himself King of Prussia after annexing Royal Prussia from the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772. His most significant accomplishments include military successes in the Silesian wars, reorganisation of the Prussian Army, the First Partition of Poland, and patronage of the arts and the Enlightenment.

[103] Maria Theresa (Maria Theresia Walburga Amalia Christina; 1717 – 1780) was the ruler of the Habsburg monarchy from 1740 until her death in 1780, and the only woman to hold the position in her own right. She was the sovereign of Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Bohemia, Transylvania, Slavonia, Mantua, Milan, Moravia, Galicia and Lodomeria, Dalmatia, Austrian Netherlands, Carinthia, Carniola, Gorizia and Gradisca, Austrian Silesia, Tyrol, Styria and Parma. By marriage, she was Duchess of Lorraine, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, and Holy Roman Empress.

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Lord Derby to Lord O. Russell.
Foreign Office, May 3, 1875.

You seem reassured as to the immediate prospect, and the panic in Paris has subsided, but great uneasiness remains. Lumley[104] writes to me that the state of things seems to him most critical, and the language which you report as held by Moltke is unpleasant enough. Münster[105] has not called for the last few days: when last I saw him, his language about French armaments tallied exactly with that which you and others report as being held by German representatives throughout Europe.

Is there no hope of Russian interference to maintain peace? It cannot be the interest of Russia to have France destroyed and Germany omnipotent. If the Czar were to say that a new war must not take place, and that he would not allow it, Bismarck would hardly undertake to fight Russia and France combined. I see little other prospect of averting mischief, and if it begins, where is it to end?

Even here, and notwithstanding the sympathy felt in the main for the Protestant German Empire, the outrageous injustice of picking a quarrel with France, because she does not choose to remain disarmed, would produce its effect. There would be a great revulsion of feeling; not unlike that which took place when the first Napoleon had begun to show his real character and objects. The English public knows little about foreign concerns, but it does understand that hitting a man when he is down is not fair play, and I think in the rest of Europe fear and jealousy of the predominant Power would give France many adherents.

I do what I can to point this out in a quiet and friendly way; but without being sanguine.

May 4. The conversation about Belgium in the House of Lords last night led to no result. I think I see a growing feeling, indicated by the language of the press, that the German demands are not

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necessarily unreasonable, and that we should at least hear more of the case before pronouncing judgment.

To judge by the reports which Nothomb sends to his own Government, he has been thoroughly frightened, and is ready to advise unconditional acceptance of German proposals. Is he disposed to be an alarmist? Or has Bismarck established a personal hold over him?

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[104] British Minister at Brussels. (LN). John Savile Lumley (1818–1896), later known as John Savile, 1st Baron Savile of Rufford. He was a prominent career diplomat who held the post of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Belgium for fifteen years, from 1868 to 1883. In 1887, after inheriting the Savile family estates (including Rufford Abbey) he assumed the surname Savile in lieu of Lumley by Royal licence.

[105] German Ambassador at London. (LN). Georg Herbert Fürst zu Münster von Derneburg (1820 – 1902), also known by his earlier title of Count of Münster-Ledenburg, was a Hanoverian and later German diplomat and politician. He served as ambassador to London 1873–1885 and Paris (1885–1900).

> We are quiet at this office, busy in Parliament; the Session threatens to be long, but it will not be eventful.

On May 6, Lord Odo Russell reported that Count Schouvaloff,[106] the Russian Ambassador in London, had just arrived at Berlin from St. Petersburg, and was the bearer of important tidings.

> "The good news he brought respecting our relations with Russia filled me with delight after the dark allusions made to me here at Court and by the Chancellor during the winter. As regards Germany and the war rumours, Count Schouvaloff gave me the most satisfactory and welcome news that the Emperor of Russia is coming to Berlin on Monday next, will insist on the maintenance of peace in Europe, even at the cost of a rupture with Germany, and that he can reckon on the support of Austria in doing so.
>
> How Bismarck will meet the humiliating blow of being told by his allies, Russia and Austria, that he must keep the peace with France, when he has proclaimed to the world that France is ready to take her revenge, it is difficult to foretell. But we must not be surprised if it hastens on the outburst it is intended to prevent. I hope not, and do not expect it, but I shall not be surprised if it does, because Austria has really joined Russia. She has become an obstacle in the way of German development, which Bismarck will try to remove."

It had, of course, been the object of Bismarck to sow dissension between England and Russia, and he had

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taken elaborate pains to convince the British Government that Russia was animated by the most hostile feelings. Consequently the extremely frank and friendly sentiments expressed by Count Schouvaloff were in the nature of an agreeable surprise, but the effusion of the Russian Envoy was so great that he seems to have slightly overdone the part.

Lord O. Russell to Lord Derby.
Berlin, May 8, 1875.

> I did not report Schouvaloff's conversation because he was going to tell you all he had to say in great detail as soon as he reached London. His frankness is fascinating, but on reflection it does not inspire absolute confidence. I feel at first inclined to believe all he says; but when I think it over, it appears too good to be true.
>
> If all he represents himself to have said to Bismarck about the power of Russia to coerce Germany under certain circumstances be strictly true, Bismarck would scarcely want him to succeed Gortschakoff, as he does, if he did not feel that he could make a tool of him (Schouvaloff).
>
> According to Schouvaloff, the Czar and Gortschakoff are to tell Bismarck next week that a new war must not take place, and that if he does not submit and agree, Russia, with the concurrence of Austria, is prepared to side with France to render war impossible. In all probability, their conferences will end in mutual assurances of

[106] Count Pyotr Andreyevich Shuvalov (1827 – 1889 was an influential Russian statesman and a counselor to Tsar Alexander II.

> peace and good will, and we shall hear no more of war rumours and French armaments until those of Germany are ready; and as Bismarck is a match both for the Czar and Gortschakoff, I shall not be surprised to hear that he has persuaded them to let him have his own way in the end. But this is mere conjecture; we shall know more about it all a week hence.
>
> The whole of Bismarck's policy now tends to produce a coalition of the peaceful Powers against Germany, and his Church policy, to produce dissensions in Germany and arrest the progress of unification. It is therefore evident that he seeks a conflict for purposes of his own.

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> I may be wrong, but I cannot but think that he wants to mediatize the smaller German Powers and weaken Austria so as to render her alliance useless to Russia, France, and Italy.
>
> If I understand Schouvaloff correctly, Bismarck endeavoured to set Russia against us, as he attempted to set us against Russia, and he seemed to expect that Bismarck would make Gortschakoff various offers in return for Russian co-operation or neutrality. Indeed, he insinuated that he thought Bismarck a little out of his mind at times.
>
> The importance of the Czar's language and attitude at Berlin is so great that I look forward with anxious interest to the results of next week's conferences. For my part I have been careful to hold the language you tell me you hold at home on these matters in a friendly spirit to Germany and in the interest of European Peace.

On the same date (May 8), the Emperor Alexander and Prince Gortschakoff started on the journey to Berlin from which so much was anticipated, and the British Government addressed a despatch to Lord Odo Russell which was also circulated at Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Rome, instructing him to use all his power to put an end to the misunderstanding which had arisen between France and Germany. It is worthy of note that when this despatch was communicated to the Austrian Government, that Government alone declined to instruct their Ambassador at Berlin in the sense desired, on the ground that it would irritate Bismarck.

The Emperor Alexander and Gortschakoff arrived at Berlin on May 10, and the question of peace or war must have been decided with extreme rapidity, for Lord Odo Russell dined with Bismarck on that night, and the latter took the opportunity to express his thanks "for the very friendly offer, which he highly appreciated,

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as a proof of good will and confidence on the part of Her Majesty's Government." At the same time he expressed some naïve surprise at the offer, maintaining that all his efforts tended in the direction of peace; that the war rumours were the work of the stockjobbers and the press, and that France and Germany were on excellent terms! Under the circumstances, it is highly creditable to Lord Odo Russell that he received this communication with becoming gravity.

Gortschakoff, who made his appearance after the dinner, professed great satisfaction at Bismarck's language; but in conversation with Lord Odo Russell on the following day, May 11, Bismarck spoke with much irritation of Gortschakoff's intervention, which he attributed

to senile vanity, and stated that he had refused Gortschakoff's request for a categorical promise not to go to war, because such a promise would have implied the existence of an intention which he repudiated.

On May 12, Gortschakoff sent a telegram to St. Petersburg which gave dire offence: *La paix est assurée:*[107] and the Emperor of Russia requested Lord Odo to inform Her Majesty's Government that he felt certain of the maintenance of peace. Bismarck, secretly furious at the frustration of his plans, outwardly betrayed no ill-humour and put a good face upon his failure.

Lord O. Russell to Lord Derby.
Berlin, May 15, 1875.

> Although Bismarck is as civil, confidential, and amiable to me as ever, I fancy that he must be frantic at our combined action with Russia in favour of peace, which took him by surprise. However that matters little, and he will get over it, as he wishes to keep well with us. But he

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> will seek an opportunity of paying out Gortschakoff for having come the Peacemaker and Dictator over Germany again.
>
> For my part, I was delighted at the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government and at the instructions you sent me, which I feel sure will do good, both at home and abroad.
>
> The old Emperor William, whose bodily health is wonderful, but whose mental powers are declining, will have been surprised and grieved at the Queen writing to the Czar instead of to himself. Bismarck thinks it is due to an intrigue of the Empress Augusta[108] to spite him. His hatred and abuse of the Empress is a perfect mania. The Crown Prince sent for me to talk the incident over. He asked many questions, but was himself reserved, beyond deploring Bismarck's nervous state and policy which had been the cause of such useless alarm. He asked whether I saw any likely successor to Bismarck if his health broke down. I said plenty would be found in Germany when there was a demand for them, which Bismarck's popularity at present excluded. The Prince, though reserved, was very cordial and very anxious for information.
>
> Your conversation with Schouvaloff is word for word what he said to me. I note one mistake on his part. He spoke with certainty of Austrian co-operation, which failed us at the last moment.
>
> I was much impressed by the warmth and eloquence of the Czar's utterances of friendship for England. He seemed really to feel deeply what he said, and to wish with all his heart for an alliance with us. Gortschakoff was less ardent: it is not in his nature; but he was persuasive and consistent in his friendly assurances. Schouvaloff's attitude and language will show whether my impressions are correct or not.

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[107] Peace is assured.

[108] Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (Born Princess Maria Luise Augusta Katharina of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; 1811 – 1890) was Queen of Prussia and the first German Empress as the wife of William I, German Emperor.

> Münster's assurances to you in regard to the German army are quite correct, I believe; only it is better prepared for war than any other army in the world, and at ten days' notice. But when Bismarck tells him to lament the alarm he has created himself, and to ascribe it to Ultramontane influences in the press, Münster must feel rather ashamed of his master.

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> We may certainly reckon on peace for this year. Next year peace must depend on the state of Bismarck's combinations for the completion of his task—the unification of Germany—Russia permitting. He left for Varzin this morning, which will do him good; but he returns on the 27th instant to receive the King[109] and Queen[110] of Sweden who stay three days in Berlin.
>
> I did not mention in my official report that the Czar asked me to tell him frankly, if I was at liberty to do so, whether I thought Bismarck had designs on Austria. I told him what the wishes of the National Party were, and what they expected of Bismarck their leader, and that I believed he contemplated weakening Austria to strengthen Germany. The Czar thanked me and said that although suspicion had been suggested to him from many sides, he could not get himself to believe in so much perfidy.

Such then in brief is the story of the great war scare of 1875, a tale which has been told by many writers with embellishments suggested by either Anglophil or Russophil proclivities. Which of the two countries, England or Russia, contributed most towards the preservation of peace will probably always remain a subject of discussion, but Bismarck at all events never forgave Gortschakoff his vainglorious telegram, and he used afterwards to maintain that, whereas the English had "behaved like gentlemen," the conduct of the Russian Government came under a distinctly opposite category. It is a remarkable fact that in spite of the indisputable evidence furnished not only by the foregoing correspondence, but from other sources, Bismarck subsequently had the hardihood to assert that the war scare of 1875 was a myth invented partly by

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Décazes for stockjobbing purposes and partly by the Ultramontane press—even the English press being according to his assertions under Ultramontane influence. In the authoritative work *Bismarck: his Reflections and Reminiscences* it is lightly dismissed as an elaborate fiction. "So far was I from entertaining any such idea at the time, or afterwards, that I would rather have resigned than lent a hand in picking a quarrel which would have had no other motive than preventing France from recovering her breath and her strength." Busch,[111] in his better-known narrative, is also discreetly reticent on the subject, and the only reference to it occurs in some notes dictated to him by Bismarck in 1879.

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[109] Oscar II (Oscar Fredrik; 1829 – 1907) was King of Sweden from 1872 until his death in 1907 and King of Norway from 1872 to 1905.

[110] Sophia of Nassau (Sophia Wilhelmine Marianne Henriette; 1836 – 1913) was Queen of Sweden and Norway as the wife of King Oscar II.

[111] Julius Hermann Moritz Busch (1821 – 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.

> "As far back as 1874 the threads of the Gortschakoff-Jomini[112] policy are to be found in the foreign press—oglings and advances towards an intimacy between Russia and France of *la revanche*.[113] The rejection of these addresses is due rather to France than to Russia. This policy does not appear to have originated with the Emperor Alexander. It culminated in the period 1875-77, when the rumour was circulated that Gortschakoff had saved France from us, and when he began one of his circular despatches with the words, *Maintenant la paix est assurée*. You remember Blowitz's report in the Times. Read it again and mention the matter. His account was correct, except when he spoke of an anti-French military party in Prussia. No such party existed."

It is instructive to compare with these passages the statements made in the *Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier*.[114]

The crisis was definitely passed when Lord Lyons returned to Paris, and he found the French overflowing with gratitude for the exertions of Her Majesty's Government in favour of peace.

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Both Marshal MacMahon and the Duc Décazes were profuse in their expressions, and the latter, in particular, said that he attached immense importance to the fact that the same sentiments in favour of peace had been expressed simultaneously at Berlin by England and Russia. At the same time, while much encouraged at the thought that the danger of an attack from Germany had been averted, he affirmed very positively that he should not on this account relax his endeavours to avoid giving umbrage to the German Government. On its being pointed out to him that it was obvious that the vast and increasing sums which figured in the Budget of the French War Department had produced in Germany a very general impression that France was preparing for an immediate retaliatory war, he gave the somewhat unconvincing assurance that a vote for clothing the reserve would be struck out, but would be replaced by a supplementary vote introduced in the winter, when a vote for clothing might seem "natural and unimportant." According to Décazes, both the Emperor of Russia and Gortschakoff had, on more than one occasion, used language which showed that they viewed with satisfaction the efforts of France to restore her military power, and he endeavoured to impress upon the Ambassador that Holland first, and then Belgium, were next to France most in danger from German ambition. Finally, he pointed out with great satisfaction that Russia had not lent an ear to the offers which had, he presumed, been made to her at Berlin, to forward any ambitious views she might have in the East, and he said that he considered this particularly important, because it removed the only obstacle which might

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have interfered with a cordial co-operation, on the part of the British and Russian Governments, for the preservation of the peace of Europe. Whether any such offers were made or refused is not known, but as the next few years were to show, Décazes's conclusion was about as faulty a one as could well be imagined.

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[112] Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779 – 1869) was a Swiss-French military officer who served as a general in French and later in Russian service, and one of the most celebrated writers on the Napoleonic art of war. Jomini was largely self-taught in military strategy, and his ideas are a staple at military academies,

[113] Revenge.

[114] Sir Robert Burnett David Morier (1826 – 1893) was a British diplomat, who most notably served as the British Ambassador to Russia between 1884 and 1893.

> "As regards public opinion in this country," said Lord Lyons, "I find no diminution of the conviction that at the present moment a war with Germany would be fatal to France, and that very many years must elapse before France will be able to undertake such a war with any prospect of success. All Frenchmen are earnestly desirous that their army should be as speedily as possible placed upon such a footing as to give them some security against attack, and some influence in the world—but few look forward to there being a time when they can contend with Germany, unless they have a powerful ally to fight beside them in the field.
>
> "In the meantime I must confess that the gratitude towards England, which I hear expressed by men of all parties, far exceeds anything that I could have expected. On the one hand it shows perhaps the greatness of the terror from which the French have just been relieved; but on the other, it is, I think, an indication of a sincere disposition to accept heartily and ungrudgingly any proof of good will from England."

The insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which broke out in the summer of 1875, and the Turkish bankruptcy which followed a little later, provided the French with fresh cause for apprehension, as it was realized that the Eastern Question was once again reopened, and that any differences that might arise between England and Russia would be to the disadvantage of France. The French, who now saw the hand of

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Bismarck in everything, believed that he had a plan of sending the Austrian army into the Herzegovina, and the Russian army into some other part of Turkey, with a view to sending the German army into France, and much as the Government would have liked to have done something for the French bondholders, and at the same time to have recovered some of the influence formerly enjoyed at Constantinople, it was afraid to take any action which might irritate the omnipotent chancellor. Perhaps this was just as well, as far as England was concerned. The project of a European Conference at Constantinople, which had been already mooted, did not appear in any way to be conducive to British interests. Austria and Russia were not in agreement as to the policy to be pursued. The former had every reason to fear a Slav development on the frontier. On the other hand, the Emperor of Russia could not, even if he wished it, afford to disregard the feeling of the Russians in favour of their fellows in race and in religion. Both Andrassy[115] and Gortschakoff foreseeing that neither could obtain a solution entirely acceptable to opinion in his own country, desired apparently to throw a part of the responsibility on a European Conference. But in such a Conference Russia would be supreme. France and Germany would bid against each other for her favour. Austria would be afraid to set herself against her, and if England had any different views, she would always be outvoted.

Attention was shortly, however, diverted to another quarter. On November 17, Lord Derby learnt that it was absolutely necessary for the Khedive[116] to procure between three and four millions sterling before the end of the month, and that he was preparing to sell his Suez Canal Shares.

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[115] Count Gyula Andrássy de Csíkszentkirály et Krasznahorka (1823 – 1890) was a Hungarian statesman, who served as Prime Minister of Hungary (1867–1871) and subsequently as Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary (1871–1879).

[116] Khedive was an honorific title of Classical Persian origin used for the sultans and grand viziers of the Ottoman Empire, but most famously for the viceroy of Egypt from 1805 to 1914.

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Lord Derby to Lord Lyons.
10, Downing Street, Whitehall, Nov. 17, 1875.

I am not quite easy in my mind about a story I hear, to the effect that the Khedive is negotiating with a French Company for the sale of his interest in the Suez Canal. If the telegram has not been sent to you officially, I will enclose it. Now his bias has always hitherto been against the pretensions of Lesseps,[117] and he has been of use to us in keeping that rather irrepressible gentleman in order. If he withdraws from the concern, and a French Company takes his place in it, our position will be very unfavourably altered. Have you heard anything of the negotiations in question? I really think the matter very serious, and it is one of which the English public will fully understand the importance.

I think I am not violating any confidence in enclosing to you for your personal use only an extract from Odo Russell's letter to me received on Monday which seems to throw light on the situation. I can add to it nothing in the way of comment.

Your information as to the position of the French Government is satisfactory. It looks as if the worst of their troubles were over.

P.S.—Since I began this note I have received further details, which I send you, and, I may add in strict confidence that we are prepared ourselves to take over the Viceroy's interest, if it cannot be kept out of French hands by other means.

I find Lord Odo's letter is with the Prime Minister, so the extract I promised must wait till next messenger.

The result of Lord Lyons's inquiries, which had to be made very discreetly, so as not to create suspicion, was the discovery that the Khedive was actively negotiating with a French Company, but it was believed

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that he wanted to mortgage, and not to sell the shares. Lord Derby's next letter to Lord Lyons shows how reluctantly he took action.

Lord Derby to Lord Lyons
Nov. 19, 1875.

From General Stanton's[118] telegrams it appears that the Khedive has no intention of selling his interest in the Suez Canal, though he may be obliged to mortgage it for a time. He has promised to give us notice, if, from any cause, he should change his mind, and to give us the option of purchase.

[117] Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps (1805 – 1894) was a French Orientalist, diplomat and later developer of the Suez Canal

[118] British Consul-General to Cairo (LN). General Sir Edward Stanton (1827 – 1907) was a British Army officer and diplomat. He was appointed Consul-General in Warsaw, Poland on 7 December 1860, Agent and Consul-General in Egypt on 15 May 1865, and *Chargé d'Affaires* to the King of Bavaria on 10 May 1876

I sincerely hope we may not be driven to that expedient. The acquisition would be a bad one financially, and the affair might involve us in disagreeable correspondence both with France and the Porte.[119] But there is a strong feeling here about not letting the Canal go still more exclusively into French hands, and as we contribute nearly four-fifths of the traffic, it cannot be said that this jealousy is unreasonable. There are intrigues of all sorts going on at Cairo, but I think we may reckon on the Khedive being true to us, if not tempted too strongly. I rely on you to tell me all you hear on the subject.

The memorandum of Lord Odo Russell referred to by Lord Derby is a lucid exposition of the European situation at the time and of Bismarck's attitude with regard to the other Powers, more especially Russia.

Lord Odo Russell to Lord Derby
Berlin, Nov. 12, 1875.

Bülow is loquacious and straightforward on most subjects; but his reticence on Oriental affairs is remarkable. I have repeatedly tried the experiment of talking over what the newspapers say, to draw him out, but he becomes silent and embarrassed, and seeks to change the subject, and when questioned, replies that he has not lately received any information from Constantinople.

I have in consequence tried to find out through confidential sources what it all means, and putting two and two together, I make out that Bismarck feels uncertain of Russia, and does not

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wish to be committed too soon. Since Gortschakoff assumed the post of peacemaker between France and Germany, Bismarck has failed to re-establish confidential relations with Russia. In regard to Oriental affairs, Gortschakoff, instead of being satisfied to act with his German and Austrian allies exclusively, has sought to keep up an equally balanced understanding with England, France and Italy: from which Bismarck suspects that Gortschakoff does not mean to let him have his own way and wishes to control Germany through the united action and agreement of the other European Powers. This does not suit his book, and above all, he fears that Russia wishes to keep on good terms with England and France; which would, in his opinion, neutralize the exclusive action of the three Northern Powers, over which he hoped to establish his own influence to the exclusion of all other Governments. By lending his assistance to Russia in the East, he calculated on Russian neutrality in regard to his own plans, as was the case during the late war with France.

The joint action of Russia and England last May, in the interest of peace, took him by surprise, destroyed his fondest calculations, and left him isolated and disappointed to reflect on the possibility of a peace coalition against Germany, which he could not break up without the certainty of Russian neutrality or assistance. He feels that Gortschakoff has abandoned him for the time being, that he has lost the confidence of

[119] The Porte or Sublime Porte, also known as the Ottoman Porte or High Porte, was a term used to refer collectively to the central government of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. It is analogous to our reference to Whitehall or Number Ten for the British Government or Prime Minister.

the Emperor Alexander, and that while they live, there is but little hope of a change of policy in Russia, favourable to his plans—*viz*. the breaking up of Austria and the neutralization of the minor German sovereignties.

Bismarck reckoned much on his friend Schouvaloff, but Schouvaloff turned traitor last May, and is less German in England than he was in Russia, which Bismarck cynically attributed to the influence of wine and women.

Now Bismarck, I am told, affects honest indignation at the manner in which Russia is deceiving and misleading Austria in regard to Turkey; but in what that consists, I do not yet clearly understand.

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When he returns to Berlin he may possibly speak to me on these subjects, and I should be glad to know whether there is anything in particular which you may wish me to say, or not to say.

On the whole the present situation of affairs seems to me favourable to the maintenance of peace.

Of course we must be prepared for an occupation of some portions of European Turkey by Austria and Russia, but that need not necessarily lead to war.

I have also endeavoured to find out what the views of the National Party in regard to the East really are, and I find that the breaking up of European Turkey would be received with satisfaction, for the Turk has no friends in Germany. The German provinces of Austria are looked upon as the natural and inevitable inheritance, sooner or later, of the German Empire, for which Austria might be compensated in Turkey, with or without Constantinople. Some people talk wildly of giving Constantinople to Greece, as less likely to be objected to by the Western Powers. But even Russia might take possession of Constantinople without objection on the part of Germany. Anything calculated to break the influence of France in the East, which is still thought to be too great, would be popular in Germany, and more especially if the interests of the Latin Church could be injured by it.

England may have Egypt if she likes. Germany will graciously not object.

Since May it has become manifest that Russia has the power to hamper the movements of Germany and arrest her progress effectually, and that Germany can undertake nothing new without the passive consent of Russia. This power must be so intolerable to Bismarck that he is sure to exercise all his skill in drawing Russia out of the combined arms of the Great Powers, back into his own exclusive embrace. This, a difference between Russia and Austria about Turkey, might enable him to achieve.

Bismarck's endeavours last winter to make us suspicious of Russia, and vice versâ, are now fully explained. His failure must add to the general irritation he suffers from.

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The situation will become clearer when he returns to Berlin in the course of the winter.

Lord Odo Russell's view of the situation tallied with what Gortschakoff had said to Décazes, Thiers, and other people at Vevey, earlier in the year. The preservation of peace seemed, therefore, to rest largely on Russia, and it was unfortunate that the Eastern Question presented itself in a form which certainly favoured Bismarck's efforts to create differences between Russia and Austria, and between Russia and England.

Further inquiries in Paris with regard to the Khedive's action seemed to confirm the view that he was seeking to mortgage the shares, but to whom they were to be mortgaged was unknown. On November 27, there arrived through Lord Tenterden, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, the intelligence that Her Majesty's Government had bought the shares.

Lord Tenterden*[120] *to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, Nov. 25, 1875.

> Lord Derby is ill and at home. I am not sure therefore whether he is writing to you to-night to tell you about the Suez Canal. General Stanton telegraphed that Lesseps (supposed to be backed by French Government) was offering four millions sterling (fr. 100,000,000) for the Khedive's shares, but that the Khedive would sell them to England for the same sum. Thereupon he was instructed to offer this amount, and the Khedive accepted this morning. The contract was signed to-day, as we have just heard by telegram. Messrs. Rothschild[121] advance the money on the security of the shares, £1,000,000 in December, and the rest by instalments, the Khedive to pay 5 per cent. on the shares while they remain without bearing interest (the interest being hypothecated for the next twenty years).

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> Her Majesty's Government are to apply to Parliament to take the bargain off the Rothschilds' hands.
>
> Practically, therefore, subject to Parliament's assent, Her Majesty's Government have bought the shares.
>
> I am writing in the greatest hurry but the above is a correct outline of the case.
>
> I suppose the French will make an ugly face.
>
> P.S. It has all been kept very secret so far, so pray be supposed to be ignorant till Lord Derby tells you.

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[120] Charles Stuart Aubrey Abbott, 3rd Baron Tenterden (1834 – 1882) was a British diplomat. He entered into service at the Foreign Office in 1854 by the patronage of the foreign secretary, Lord Clarendon. In 1873, Tenterden was promoted to the post of permanent under-secretary.

[121] The Rothschild banking family of England is the British branch of the Rothschild family. It was founded in 1798 by Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836) who first settled in Manchester before moving to London. He was sent there from his home in Frankfurt by his father, Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744–1812). Wanting his sons to succeed on their own and to expand the family business across Europe, Mayer Amschel Rothschild had his eldest son remain in Frankfurt, while his four other sons were sent to different European cities to establish a financial institution to invest in business and provide banking services. Nathan Mayer Rothschild, the third son, went on to establish N.M. Rothschild & Sons bank in London.

The action of Her Majesty's Government was taken none too soon, for as Lord Lyons reported, the shares very nearly fell into the hands of the French. On November 26 the purchase of the shares was publicly announced, and on the following day Lord Derby had an interview with the French Ambassador on the subject.

Lord Derby to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, Nov. 27, 1875.

I have seen d'Harcourt.[122] He came to hear what I could tell him about the Suez affair, and I told him the whole story exactly as it is.

He says that there will be some soreness in France, and I am afraid he is right. You know the facts, and I need not therefore repeat them. The points which I dwelt on were these:

We did not wish that the Khedive would sell, nor was there on our part the slightest desire to alter the *status quo*. But we could not help his selling, and as he had decided on doing so, we took the only effectual steps to prevent the possibility of the shares falling into hands whose possession of them might not be favourable to our interests. The suddenness of the whole affair was not our doing. If we had delayed, other purchasers would have come forward. We had to take the opportunity as it offered itself or lose it altogether.

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It is not in the power of the British Government to act as Continental Governments can, through third parties—banks, financial companies, and the like. What we do, we must do openly, and in our own names, so that Parliament may judge of the whole transaction. This I said in answer to a remark made by d'Harcourt, that the act would have had less political significance if done through some company, or otherwise, and not directly in the name of the State.

We hold even now a minority of the canal shares. The question for us is not one of establishing an exclusive interest, but of preventing an exclusive interest from being established as against us.

I have always expressed my opinion that the best arrangement for all the world would be the placing of the Canal under an International Commission, like that of the Danube; and I think so still. I knew, I said, that the French Government were not prepared to entertain any such idea, and I therefore did not put it forward; but if France and other Governments altered their way of thinking, I did not think any difficulties would be made by England.

M. d'Harcourt expressed some fear, or at least thought that some would be felt, lest the Khedive should be unable to pay his promised £200,000 a year, and we in consequence should use some means to coerce him, which would practically establish England in authority in Egypt. I assured him that nothing was further from our

[122] Louis-Emmanuel, Viscount of Harcourt (1844 – 1928) was a French soldier, diplomat, politician and secretary general of the presidency of the Republic from 1873 to 1877.

> thoughts. We wanted the passage through Egypt as free for ourselves as for the rest of the world, and we wanted nothing more.

The purchase of the Suez Canal shares has always been surrounded with much glamour and mystery, but in reality it seems to have been a perfectly straightforward and business-like proceeding, to which no reasonable objection could be taken. So far from being a profound political coup long calculated in advance,

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the action of Her Majesty's Government was totally unpremeditated, and as far as Lord Derby was concerned, it was undertaken with reluctance, and under the conviction that England was making a bad bargain. So little confidence did Lord Derby feel, and so averse was he from incurring any further responsibility in Egypt, that he unhesitatingly declined a new proposal of the Khedive that he should sell to the British Government his contingent interest in the profits of the Suez Canal above five per cent., and informed the French of the fact. The British public, which warmly approved the transaction, seems to have been a better judge of the Foreign Secretary's action than he was himself. The four millions' worth of shares acquired by the British Government represented nine-twentieths of the entire amount, and it is interesting to compare these figures with the estimate put upon the value of the Canal by Lesseps. On July 11, 1874, the latter called upon Lord Lyons and said that two persons from England had sounded him about the sale of the Canal; one a member of the English branch of the Rothschild family, and the other a Baron Emile d'Erlanger,[123] a well-known banker living in Paris.

> The Rothschild was no doubt Nathaniel,[124] M.P. for Aylesbury, who was here in the beginning of June. Lesseps said that on being pressed by him to state a sum, for which the Canal might be purchased, he had said a milliard (£40,000,000) and he declared that although this sum had startled even a Rothschild, it was only a fair one. His object with me seemed to be to give the impression that the shareholders would not sell the Canal for any sum.[125]

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Although the French could hardly be expected to approve of the action of the British Government, which, if it had occurred some years earlier, would have caused a storm of indignation, they were, under existing circumstances, forced to accept it with tolerable equanimity, as it was of no use to add a coolness with England to their other difficulties; and, in addition, they gained a great deal by the rise which took place in Canal shares and Egyptian securities. Lesseps professed himself to be delighted and Bismarck sent a message to say that the policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government had met with the support of the German Government.

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[123] Frédéric Émile, Baron d'Erlanger (1832 – 1911) born as Friedrich Emil Erlanger, was a German-French banker and consul. He founded the French branch of the Erlanger banking businesses, Emile Erlanger & Co.
[124] Now Lord Rothschild. (LN) Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild, 1st Baron Rothschild, (1840 – 1915) was a British banker and politician from the wealthy international Rothschild family.
[125] Lord Lyons to Lord Derby, July 11, 1874. (LN)

CHAPTER XII

THE EASTERN QUESTION (1876-1878)

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In January, 1876, the gradual spread of the insurrection in Turkey led to the concoction by the three Imperial Powers of the so-called "Andrassy Note," and the great question was whether England would consent to take part in its presentation, in view of her traditional attitude towards Turkey. Lord Derby, in a letter to Lord Lyons, stated that Bismarck was very anxious that we should do so, and explained that although "one can trust none of these Governments, it is as well to give them credit for acting honestly until the reverse is proved," and he was therefore in favour of such a course himself. In a letter of January 7, 1876 addressed to Mr. Disraeli, asking for his views on the subject, Lord Derby remarked that: "It is too late to stand on the dignity and independence of the Sultan; a Sovereign who can neither keep the peace at home, nor pay his debts, must expect to submit to some disagreeable consequences." Lord Lyons, on being consulted, concurred with Lord Derby's views.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Jan. 14, 1876.

I hardly see how England is to avoid supporting the Andrassy Note.[126] If we stand aloof we shall

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stand alone. If our secession produces no effect and the Turks still accept, we shall be in the same foolish position France was in 1840; with this serious inconvenience, that if the Andrassy plan fails in pacifying the Herzegovina, we shall be blamed for the failure, as having caused it by breaking up the unanimity of Europe. If the Turks do not accept, they will be ready enough to throw the responsibility upon us, and to call upon us to get them out of the scrape into which they will get with the other Powers. I think that by consenting we should leave the Powers least excuse for attacking Turkey, or at all events, least excuse for pushing on without consulting us. I should not be for qualifying our support too much, for, if we do, the failure of the plan, which is in my opinion more than probable, will still be attributed to us, and a support, given as it were against our will, and restricted to the least possible amount, will be treated very much as opposition. I say all this because you ask me to tell you what I think: but there are two important elements for forming an opinion which I lack. I mean a knowledge of public opinion in England, and a knowledge of the real feelings of the three Empires towards each other.

The despatch from Odo Russell looks as if Bismarck was preparing for the possibility of a quarrel with Russia. Ever since 1870 he has been very naturally trying to turn

[126] The Berlin Memorandum was a document drawn up by the three imperial world powers in 1876 to address the Eastern Question during the Crisis of 1875-1878. Its purpose was for the three imperial powers of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany to address the state of relations between the Islamic Ottoman Empire and the Christian peoples of the Balkans, with whom these imperial powers had international relationships and interests, and to correct the "Andrássy Note", an earlier document with similar intentions from Count Gyula Andrássy the Foreign Minister of Hungary.

every opportunity of dividing England from France to account. But since you joined Russia in insisting upon peace last year, and still more since the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, he has no doubt formed a higher opinion of England, and conceived the idea that she still has the will and the means to play a foremost part in European politics. Like everybody else, he feels sure that if there is a quarrel between Russia and Germany, France will side with Russia. In order to prevent his enemy being all powerful at sea, he must have the English fleet not merely neutral, but on his side. The only advantage he can offer to England is support on the Eastern Question, and it is on this question that he would have the best chance of embroiling her with Russia. What part he means Austria to play, I find it more difficult to guess. That he intends some day,

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and by some means, to annex German Austria to the German Empire I make no doubt, but I suppose he is in no hurry to add so large a Roman Catholic and Southern population to the electors of the Diet of the Empire.

The worst service we could render France at present would be to set up a separate understanding with her in opposition to Germany.

The French Government was desperately anxious that England should not separate herself from the other Powers, partly from fear that such action would cause European complications, and partly because it was particularly desirous of getting credit with Russia for having brought English opinion round to Russian views. Her Majesty's Government finally decided to join in the Andrassy Note, although it would appear from Lord Derby's language, that the Cabinet were not unanimous on the question.

Meanwhile French internal politics remained in the same confused and unsatisfactory state which had prevailed for so long. The divisions amongst the Conservatives had made Monarchical Government in any form impossible, and yet they refused to acquiesce, even temporarily, in the moderate form of Republic which had been established, and seemed bent upon doing all they could to exchange their King Log for a King Stork in the shape of a Red Republic. The elections which took place in the beginning of the year 1876 resulted in large Republican majorities both in the Senate and in the Chamber, and in the case of the former, this result was singularly unfortunate for Marshal MacMahon, as it deprived him of the power of forcing a dissolution. A letter from Lord Lyons to the Prince of Wales, who was on his way back from India, summarizes the French internal situation.

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Lord Lyons to the Prince of Wales
Paris, March 7, 1876.

I cannot give your Royal Highness a very satisfactory account of French politics, although I do not take so gloomy a view of them as many Frenchmen do. The large number of advanced Republicans in the new Chamber of Deputies, the not inconsiderable number of Ultra-Radicals, and the complete defeat of the Moderate Conservatives in the Elections not unnaturally frighten the upper classes of Frenchmen. But in fact so many of the members are quite new men, that one cannot foresee how parties will group themselves. The Chambers meet to-morrow, and in about a month's time it will be possible to form an opinion as to how things are likely

> to go. So long as Marshal MacMahon is at the head of the State and of the army, there can be no fear of any serious disturbance of material order; and if he is at the same time firm and conciliatory with the new Chamber, and willing to take a Ministry from the more moderate members of the majority, he will very probably be rewarded by finding how tame demagogues can become in office. I understand the Marshal insists upon having Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs whom he knows and in whom he has confidence, but that he is willing to let the other Departments be filled by men taken in the ordinary way from the majority.
>
> So far we have not this year been disturbed, as we were last spring, by rumours of war, and agriculture and commerce are flourishing in France, and the revenue goes on increasing.
>
> Of the Egyptian Financial Question Your Royal Highness will learn all particulars on the spot. Neither that, nor the Herzegovina question are settled at this moment, but we must hope that they are on the eve of being settled.

One of the new features in the French political situation was the recovery by Gambetta of his former influence, and as he was now a person of considerable influence, Sheffield[127] was utilized for the purpose of

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eliciting his views. The late Mr George Sheffield, who acted as Lord Lyons's private secretary for over twenty years, was a well-known figure in the political and social world of Paris, and included in his acquaintance most people both there and in London who were worth knowing. Not only did he enjoy much personal popularity, but as he was known to be completely in Lord Lyons's confidence, he was the recipient of much confidential information, and generally believed to be a model of discretion. One of his peculiarities was that, in spite of much practice, he spoke very imperfect French with an atrocious accent, but this circumstance never appeared to prejudice him in any way, and it may incidentally be noted that the possession of what is called a good French accent is a much overrated accomplishment in France itself. Frenchmen rarely wish to listen; they desire to talk themselves and to be listened to; to them, as a rule, a foreigner is a foreigner and nothing more, and whether he speaks French well or ill, they seldom notice and rarely care.

Gambetta, having secured a listener in the person of Sheffield, was no doubt delighted to expound his views on the situation. First of all, speaking on the subject of Bonapartist successes at the elections, he said that Bonapartism would die out as soon as it was realized that a moderate Republic was firmly established. He expressed great delight at the fall of

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[127] There is no *Wikipedia* article for George Sheffield but *Alumni Oxonienses*: *the Members of the University of Oxford*, *1715-1886*, by Joseph Foster, notes the following man:- Sheffield, George, 4th son of 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. *Google Gemini* gathered the following information. He served as Lord Lyons's private secretary during his major embassies in Washington (1859 – 1865) and Paris (1867 – 1887). He was born on 13 September 1836 the son of Sir Robert Sheffield, 4th Baronet, of Normanby Hall, Lincolnshire, and Julia Brigidia Newbolt. He retired from the Diplomatic Service in 1888, shortly after Lord Lyons's death in late 1887. He died October 10th 1898, at the age of 62. Sheffield was essentially Lyons's right-hand man. He enjoyed the Ambassador's absolute confidence and managed the vast bulk of his private and semi-official correspondence.

Thiers (Thiers had once described him as a *fou furieux*[128]), and said that under him no real self-acting Republic could ever have been formed, that it would have fallen to pieces at his death, and indeed that the best thing Thiers could do for the Republic would be to die. For Marshal

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MacMahon's entourage he had a great dislike, but for the Marshal himself much respect, and he aspired to be Prime Minister under him—a post to which he considered that he was fully entitled, but which the Décazes, Broglie, the Marshal's secretaries and the *Maréchale* and her friends would do their best to prevent him obtaining. He professed confidence in being able to keep the extreme Radicals in order; said that the Red Flag was as obnoxious to him as the White Flag; that he was not inclined to grant a general amnesty to the Communists, and that he would not agree to the re-establishment of the National Guard. He also professed himself to be in favour of Free Trade, and asserted that the commercial Treaty concluded by Napoleon III accounted for many of the Bonapartist successes.

Gambetta's aspiration of serving under the Marshal was never fulfilled, the above-mentioned entourage being presumably too strong for him; but the upper classes in France continued to look forward to the future with undiminished apprehension. French capital, reversing the present process, began to pour steadily into England, and it was stated that the rich Radicals were not the last in sending their money abroad.

> "Marshal MacMahon's position," wrote Lord Lyons at the end of March, "does not improve. He has so little political knowledge or ability that, as events have shown, he exercises little or no personal influence in politics. There is also a jealousy springing up with regard to Emmanuel d'Harcourt and other people about him who are supposed to direct his political conduct. The officers now at the head of the army would follow the Marshal very far in any Conservative direction, but it may be questioned whether they would submit patiently to being placed under a

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> Radical Minister of War—Gambetta for instance. It is the Marshal's political intelligence that is doubted. No one has a word to say against his disinterestedness, his honour, or his courage."

Marshal MacMahon, a simple and amiable soldier, who knew nothing about politics, was credited with an overwhelming admiration for the capacity of his private secretary, Emmanuel d'Harcourt. Upon one occasion, the question of applying for the extradition of a criminal who had fled to America was being discussed in his presence. "Well," said the Marshal, "we must telegraph at once to San Francisco." "*Pardon, M. le Maréchal*," interposed d'Harcourt, "Washington, not San Francisco, is the capital of the United States." The Marshal was so astounded at the profundity of his private secretary's knowledge that he was only able to ejaculate: "*Ce diable d'Harcourt! il sait tout!*"[129]

Many stories were told of his engaging simplicity of character, of which the following will serve as an instance. Upon one occasion he was inspecting a military academy, and was informed that there was present a young Arab chieftain of distinguished lineage to whom it

[128] A madman
[129] That devil d'Harcourt knows everything.

would be desirable to address some words of encouragement. The young man was brought up, whereupon the following brief colloquy ensued:—

> Marshal: "*Ah! c'est vous qui êtes le nègre?*"
> Arab Chief: "*Oui, M. le Maréchal.*"
> Marshal: "*Eh bien, mon garçon, continuez*!"[130]

By a curious combination of circumstances, Marshal MacMahon, with his inadequate political and intellectual equipment, was still able for some time to fill the place of a constitutional sovereign, and virtually the French were living under a constitutional

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Monarchy, with an Executive possessing large powers, rather than under a Republic. This state of things, however, could not last for long, and it seemed as if the choice lay between the youthful Prince Imperial and the establishment of a really Radical Republic.

In one respect the French had every reason to congratulate themselves, namely, upon the re-organization of their army, and some of the political consequences which were likely to result from this increased and increasing military strength are pointed out in the following letter.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Sept. 26, 1876.

> As soon as General Conolly[131] finishes his visits to the Autumn Manœuvres and makes his reports, it may perhaps be desirable for me to send you some observations on the political consequences of the great progress the French Army is making. All the officers of Foreign Armies and the English officers especially who have been out with the French troops this autumn, seem to agree in regarding the improvement as being undoubted and very considerable. In short, it may not unreasonably be expected that in about three years from this time, the French Army will be in such a state, that France will count for as much or nearly as much, in the balance of power in Europe, as she did before 1870.
>
> The different phases of public opinion since the peace of 1871 may be described as follows. At first, rage and mortification produced a wild and unreasoning cry for revenge. This was followed by a depression almost amounting to despair. In this state of things the rumours of an intended attack by Germany in 1875 produced nearly a panic. Since that time hope and confidence have gradually returned. The general sentiment now is that France is safely "biding her time."

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> Under the influence of this sentiment, the French acquiesce patiently in the present apparent eclipse of French power; they disapprove of any attempt on the part of the Government to put itself prominently forward in European politics; they desire to preserve peace and tranquility in Europe at almost any price; they wish to disarm

[130] "Marshal: "Ah! It is you who are the black one?" Arab Chief: "Yes, Marshall." Marshal: "Very good my boy, carry on!"
[131] This is Major-General James Conolly. He served as the Military *Attaché* at the British Embassy in Paris. His role involved reporting on the reconstruction of the French Army following the Franco-Prussian War, a topic of intense interest to Lyons. (*Google Gemini*)

suspicion, and to be allowed three or four years more to recruit their strength. Their policy consequently is to adjourn as far as possible all questions.

Their ultimate object in all they do, is to recover their lost Provinces; but however confident they may be of recovering in a few years their old position in the world, I do not believe that they contemplate, as the immediate result, an attack upon Germany. I do not think that they at all foresee a time at which they could run the risk of making such an attack singlehanded. What they do intend, is to put forward with vigour their own views with regard to the numerous questions they now leave more or less in abeyance, and to contract if possible foreign alliances on equal terms.

One of the questions with regard to which they will be disposed to change their tone very considerably will be that of Egypt.

Another may possibly be that of the Newfoundland Fisheries, if we do not succeed in effecting some sort of settlement of it in the meantime.

A third may be the extension of their possessions in Cochin China, and of their protectorate of Annam.

With regard to alliances, that which they will first seek will no doubt be the alliance of Russia, and in a case of great emergency, they would make great sacrifices of Western interests to obtain it.

They will desire to keep on good terms with England, so far at all events as to avoid throwing her into the arms of Germany, but as they are not likely to conceive hopes of obtaining effectual assistance from England towards recovering Alsace and Lorraine, they will not be so eager for an English as a Russian alliance.

Another contingency to be kept in view is that a new President or a new Dynasty,

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desirous of consolidating themselves by a little military glory, may be led to direct an attack upon whatever quarter it may be easiest to do so.

I will not however go on with mere speculations of this kind. Of the truth of the conclusions to which I have come, I entertain very little doubt. In two or three years France will not be in the same accommodating frame of mind in which she is now, and will have very much more powerful means than she has now of enforcing attention to her wishes. All questions therefore in which the influence of France is hostile, should be settled as quickly as possible. The restoration of the strength of France may be found useful in redressing the balance of power, but, anyhow, it should be taken into account in all political calculations.

It was not long before these anticipations were justified, but for the present, relations between England and France remained on a friendly footing, no doubt much to Bismarck's displeasure, who, at this period, was continually urging us to take Egypt and not to do anything else. As a matter of fact, if we had seized Egypt in 1876, it would not have had the immediate effect of embroiling us with France. On the contrary, all those who had a pecuniary interest in Egypt thought that they would gain by our taking possession of the

country, while the great majority of Frenchmen looked upon the thing as inevitable, and thought it better to put a good face upon the matter. Any contradiction of the supposed English designs upon Egypt, however sincere and positive, met with no credence at all.
There is an instructive extract on the subject, contained in a letter of Lord Derby of December 6th 1876.

> It is evidently useless to say that we don't want Egypt and don't intend to take it: we must leave

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> our friends to be convinced by the event. I have no doubt that everybody out of France would be glad that we should seize the country. Russia would like it, as making us an accomplice in her plans. Germany would like it still more, as ensuring our being on uncomfortable terms with France for some years to come. Italy would see in it a precedent and a justification for seizing Tunis; Spain, the same, in regard to Morocco. But you may be assured that we have no such designs and are not going to run into adventures of this kind.

There can be no possible doubt as to Lord Derby's sincerity; indeed, he was so constitutionally averse from an adventurous foreign policy, that a year or two later, Lord Salisbury[132] said of his ex-colleague that he could never have brought himself to annex the Isle of Man. It is interesting to note that, in the above forecast of international brigandage, Tunis and not Tripoli was allotted to Italy, the designs of France in the former direction not apparently being suspected.

Before the end of 1876 the experiment of trying to work the institutions of a Constitutional Monarchy in France under an elective chief magistrate had very nearly come to a deadlock. The Left were determined to get real power into their hands and not to allow themselves to be thwarted by the conservative tendencies of the Marshal and his personal friends. On the one hand, the Marshal stoutly maintained that he would have Ministers of his own choice in the Departments of War and Foreign Affairs, whereas the Left, so long as they had a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, were, under Constitutional Government, clearly entitled to

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decide the matter. But the question was complicated, because the Marshal, as well as the Ministers, was in a position to resort to resignation of office, and a severe Ministerial crisis ensued. Ultimately, the Marshal succeeded in keeping his Minister of War and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, but he was forced to accept, as Prime Minister, M. Jules Simon.[133] The latter, although an able and conciliatory man, had been a member of the Revolutionary Government of National Defence, and having been forced to yield so far to his opponents, it seemed not improbable that the Marshal before long would be obliged to have recourse to Gambetta himself. Gambetta, as has been shown, had lately become much more moderate in his views, but in the opinion of many people he still represented the Red Spectre, and it was

[132] Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830 – 1903), known as Lord Salisbury, was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom three times for a total of over thirteen years. He was also Foreign Secretary before and during most of his tenure. He avoided international alignments or alliances, maintaining the policy of "splendid isolation".
[133] Jules François Simon (1814 – 1896) was a French statesman and philosopher, and one of the leaders of the Moderate Republicans in the Third French Republic.

believed that his assumption of office would mean Communism, Socialism, equal division of property, judges appointed by election for short periods, the prohibition of marriage, and the suppression of religion. The desire of the Bonapartists was that the Government should fall into the hands of the extreme Left, in the hope that the people, from fear of the above contingencies, would clamour for the Empire; but what was more remarkable was, that many Orleanists as well as moderate and timid Conservatives wished to drive the Marshal to a dissolution in the hope of a reaction. There could have been no better proof of their short-sightedness and incapacity, for the mass of the electors were not in the least likely to make fine distinctions, and if really afraid of the Republic would certainly vote for nothing short of the Empire.

The Conference which had assembled at Constantinople in the autumn in the hope of settling the Eastern

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Question, with Lord Salisbury as one of the British representatives, broke up in January,1877, and it became clear that war between Russia and Turkey was unavoidable. Lord Derby, who was the reverse of sanguine by temperament, had never entertained any hopes of its success, and was quite determined that, whatever happened, there should be no British intervention. "I am amused," he wrote to Lord Odo Russell, on January 24th 1877, "by your description of the Russo-German suspicions entertained against us; these fellows make us act as they would act in our place. They can neither deal straightforwardly themselves, nor give anybody else credit for doing so.

"If you are asked what steps England is going to take next, your true answer should be *none*. We shall wait, say little, and pledge ourselves to nothing."

The break up of the Conference filled the French with alarm.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Feb. 5, 1877.

> It is believed here that Bismarck is determined to produce at least such a scare as he did two years ago, if not to do more. The idea provokes some anger, but more fear. Nevertheless, the danger is greater now than it was last time; for although France is very far from being ready for even a defensive war, she does feel so much stronger than she did in 1875, as not to be willing to bear quite as much from Germany as she would have borne then.
>
> The impressions prevalent here are:
>
> That Bismarck is very much disappointed by the result of the Constantinople Conference, which he had hoped would have ended by setting all Europe by the ears.

That he is very much irritated by the cordiality which existed between the English, French, and Russian Plenipotentiaries, and by the considerable part taken by Chaudordy[134] in the proceedings.

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That he is very much annoyed by the number of Socialist votes given in the recent German elections, and is eager to destroy Paris as the hotbed of socialism.

That he wants a cry to make the Germans pay their taxes willingly.

That he looks with an evil eye upon the material prosperity of France.

That he considers the Exhibition of 1878 as a sort of defiance of Germany, and is ready to go great lengths to prevent its taking place.

These are French views, not mine; but I do agree with the conclusion which the greater and the wiser part of the French nation draw from them: namely that it behoves France to be more than ever prudent and cautious, and more than ever careful not to give Germany any pretext for a quarrel.

France is certainly not at all likely to oppose Russia in anything that country may undertake in the East; but she is still less likely to give her any military assistance there. She might not be able to resist the bait, if Russia held it out, of an offensive and defensive alliance against Germany, but in that case she would more than ever want her own forces on this side of Germany. This contingency, however, is too improbable to be worth considering.

It is quite true that France has a large force on her Eastern Frontier, and that she is hard at work there, but considering the difficulty of guarding that frontier, such as it has been left by the Treaty of 1871, her objects may well be supposed to be purely defensive.

Lord Salisbury is to arrive this evening and to go on to London without stopping.

It is interesting to note that Lord Salisbury, while at Constantinople, formed a very poor opinion of the capacity of Sultan Abdul Hamid[135]—an opinion which he must have had occasion to revise later on. "Salisbury

[134] Count Jean-Baptiste-Alexandre-Damase de Chaudordy (1826 – 1899) was a French diplomat and politician. He was notably France's ambassador to Switzerland and Spain, and the representative of France at the Constantinople Conference in 1876 and 1877.

[135] Abdülhamid II or Abdul Hamid II (1842 – 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.

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reports ill of the new Sultan; calls him a poor weak creature, from whom no help is to be expected. But his judgment is the result of a single interview." So wrote Lord Derby to Lord Odo Russell.

The French representative, Chaudordy, had been very active; his zeal had alarmed his own countrymen, and was supposed to have aroused the indignation of Bismarck, but one of the singular features of the Constantinople Conference seems to have been the action of the representatives of the small Powers such as Spain, Belgium, and Holland, who did their utmost, and not entirely without effect, to spirit the Turks up to resistance. In March there was much coming and going at Paris on the part of Ignatieff[136] and Schouvaloff, who were thought to be endeavouring to secure what Russia wanted without war, and the former proceeded on a special mission to London, but the negotiations with the Turks broke down, and war was declared before the end of April. Letters from Lord Derby describing the state of feeling in England dwell upon the action of Gladstone, who, according to Schouvaloff, "was much more Russian than the Russian Government," and whose language was, "only suited to a Panslavonic Society."

The outbreak of the war between Russia and Turkey was extremely distasteful to the French for various reasons. They were convinced that it had been instigated by Bismarck, and that it would result in the overwhelming preponderance of Germany on the continent, and were equally convinced that it would lead to a great extension of English influence in the Mediterranean including an occupation of Egypt; consequently, Décazes, who was anything but a straightforward politician, and anxious beyond everything

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to hunt with the Russian hounds, and run with the English hare, was constantly expressing fears that if an English force was sent to the East, the opportunity would at once be seized by Bismarck for falling upon France. A congenial opportunity for this intriguer arose over the question whether Egypt should be called upon to render pecuniary and military assistance to Turkey, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to persuade the Khedive that if he refused to comply, he would be protected. By these means Décazes would have secured the treble advantage of making himself agreeable to Russia, of pleasing the French bondholders, and, to a certain degree, of thwarting England in Egypt. Unluckily for him, the scheme miscarried; but in spite of ardent professions of neutrality, he contrived to render services to Russia which were of some considerable service.

He used his influence to obtain a loan for her in Paris; his agents in Egypt supported the Russian threats to blockade the Suez Canal, and the effect of the Franco-Russian understanding was to force Germany to make greater sacrifices in order to retain the friendship of Russia by furthering Russian policy in the East. One of the methods by which the Germans sought to ingratiate themselves with Russia took the remarkable form of insisting (as the British Ambassador at Constantinople pointed out) that Russian subjects who remained in Turkey during the war, should not only be entitled to remain there undisturbed,

[136] Count Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev (1832 – 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. He was also the minister of the interior from 1881 to 1882, where he promoted ultraconservative and Slavic-nationalist policies.

but permitted to enjoy all the privileges of the capitulations, this being apparently the German conception of neutrality.

The double game which Décazes was playing was not, however, popular in France. It was felt that his

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intrigues with Russia tended to throw England into the arms of Germany, and his enemies asserted that he was too fond of speculation to be a thoroughly satisfactory Minister. However, an internal political crisis of an exceptionally important nature in May diverted French attention from all foreign questions for the time being.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, May 16, 1877.

> The Marshal has been getting more and more uncomfortable about M. Jules Simon's giving way in the Chamber of Deputies to the more advanced Left, and now, as you will have learnt from my telegrams, he has turned him out. It is believed that if matters came to extremities, the Marshal will bring out a thoroughly reactionary Ministry which he has *in petto*.[137] –the Duc de Broglie, Prime Minister, General Ducrot, Minister of War, and so on. This would necessitate a dissolution, for which the consent of the Senate would be necessary. But it is very doubtful whether the country is ripe for anything of the kind, and whether the result might not be the return of a still more radical Chamber than the present; and then either the Marshal must retire and hand the Government over to Gambetta or some one still more advanced in opinion, or make a real *coup d'état* by means of the army.
>
> However he will no doubt try to form a Ministry rather more Conservative than the last and still able to get on somehow with the present Chamber of Deputies; but this will be difficult.
>
> One of the Marshal's grounds of dissatisfaction with M. Jules Simon was that he would not, or could not, get from the Chamber powers which would enable the Government to restrain the press from attacking Germany in the dangerous manner in which it has written against that country lately.

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The action of the Marshal in turning out Jules Simon, who was supported by a majority in a recently elected Chamber, and replacing him by the Duc de Broglie, who was extremely unpopular, might well be described as a very strong measure. Décazes, who was supposed to be in the plot, remained in office, and there was therefore not much probability of a change in foreign policy; but it was evident that there were now only two real parties in France—the Republicans and the Bonapartists. The possible restoration of the Empire filled with dismay Lord Derby, who considered that the last six years had witnessed a great purification both of public and private life in France, and that if the French were going back to a "Government of adventurers, adventuresses, and priests," it would be a grave misfortune for Europe; and he was most anxious to let it be known that there was no sympathy in England for Bonapartist intrigues.

[137] In the chest and by implication ready to deploy.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, May 18, 1877.

There are of course among the Right, many who, wisely or unwisely, rejoice that Marshal MacMahon has broken with the Left, but there is hardly any one who does not think the moment ill chosen, the reasons assigned insufficient, and the mode adopted unskilful. Décazes is represented, or misrepresented, as having been at the bottom of the whole thing.

He came up to me last night, and asked if I had not something to say to him about the sentiments he had expressed to me with regard to the dangers to English interests in Western Europe. He also expressed anxiety to know how the question of the wine duties was getting on in England. He is, I suppose, anxious to have something to show that he is successful in cultivating intimate relations with England.

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While he seems so desirous of frightening us about Holland, he shows no inclination to admit that we have any interests at all in the East. In fact his plan seems to be to involve us in a quarrel with Germany, while he keeps safely aloof: to curry favour with Russia by taking to himself the credit of keeping our forces out of the East; to prevent any increase of our power in the Mediterranean, and to be well with us, but, if possible, better still with Russia. Still, on the whole, I am glad he remains in. I should not have been sorry to have Broglie himself as Minister for Foreign Affairs, but we might have a much more embarrassing Minister than Décazes, and he is easy going and conciliatory in most matters. Only we must not be surprised if he repeats to Russia, and Russia repeats to Germany, anything likely to impair our relations with Germany.

The other Ministers would almost seem to have been chosen for the express purpose of defying the majority of the Chamber. Broglie, of whom I have a high opinion, is especially unpopular. I suppose the notion has been to put as far as possible representatives of all shades of the Right into the Cabinet, in order to be able to form a coalition strong enough to obtain a vote in the Senate for dissolution. It is not certain that such a vote could be carried, the Conservative majority in the Senate being only 2 or 3 on ordinary occasions.

Décazes took advantage of the occasion actually to suggest a secret alliance with England for the protection of Holland and Belgium, and stated that if it were ever signed, he should communicate to no single person except the Marshal himself. It is hardly credible that he could have been in earnest in making this suggestion, for not only are Foreign Secretaries not in the habit of making secret treaties unknown to their chiefs and colleagues, but Lord Derby was the last person who would be likely to enter into an enterprise of

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this description. In the meanwhile Bismarck, as an impartial friend, was warning Lord Odo Russell that Décazes was only waiting for an opportunity to throw England over, in order to prove his devotion to Russia, and there was little doubt as to which alliance he would prefer if he could have his choice.

Exercising his right, Marshal MacMahon prorogued the Chambers, and it being foreseen that there would be a general election in the autumn, his Government set to work at once in preparing for the fight by getting rid of as many Republican functionaries as possible, in accordance with well-established custom.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, May 25, 1877.

Neither the private history of the dismissal of Jules Simon, nor the attitude of the successful party, is calculated to give one good hope for the future.
The Marshal is supposed to have been mainly influenced by M. de St. Paul,[138] a Bonapartist and intimate friend of his, of whom he sees a great deal; by Monsignor Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans;[139] by the aides-de-camp and people about him, and (it is whispered) by Madame la Maréchale.[140] Fourtou[141] may have been in the plot, but I believe Broglie was taken by surprise. Décazes wanted to get rid of Jules Simon and Martel,[142] but to put temporarily in their places some members of the Left, who would have got on for a time with the Chamber. Jules Simon had proved a complete failure as Prime Minister; he had neither the confidence of the Marshal nor even that of the Cabinet, and he had lost all influence in the Chamber. He would very soon have fallen of himself if he had been left alone.

The language of the Right tends to accredit the supposition which will be most fatal to them in the country. They speak and act as if the question was one between the aristocracy and the canaille.[143]

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In fact they wound the sentiment of equality which is the strongest political and

[138] M. de St. Paul is identified as Horace de Saint-Paul (1838–1911), a prominent Bonapartist official and politician during the 1870s. He was a member of the *Appel au Peuple* group, which sought to restore the Napoleonic dynasty. During MacMahon's presidency, Saint-Paul served as the Director of Personnel at the Ministry of the Interior. In this role, he was notorious for "purging" the administration of republican officials and replacing them with conservatives and Bonapartists. (*Google Gemini*)
[139] Félix Antoine Philibert Dupanloup (1802 – 1878) was a French Catholic prelate who served as Bishop of Orléans from 1849 to 1878.
[140] That is the Marshall's wife, Élisabeth de MacMahon (1834–1900) born Élisabeth de La Croix de Castries. She is known to have exerted influence upon the affairs of state during the presidency of MacMahon. Her opinions about various political ministers and officials were respected, and she supported the claims of the count of Chambord on the throne of France.
[141] Marie François Oscar Bardi de Fourtou (1836 – 1897) was a French politician. He served as Minister of Transport from 7 December 1872 to 18 May 1873. He also served as Minister of Interior and Minister of Public Instruction, in which he carried out conservative policies by dismissing certain liberal professors and re-establishing censorship.
[142] Louis-Joseph Martel (1813 – 1892) was a prominent French politician of the Third Republic. He was a significant figure during the 16 May 1877 crisis, a major constitutional turning point in French history. He was a lawyer and judge before entering politics. During 1877 he served as the Minister of Justice and Worship (*Garde des Sceaux*) in the cabinet of Jules Simon. Martel was part of the government that was dismissed by President MacMahon on May 16th 1877. This led to the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies. (*Google Gemini*)
[143] Canaille refers to the lowest class of people or the rabble, often used in a derogatory sense. The term originates from the French word for "a pack of dogs," highlighting its negative connotation.

social sentiment in France, and consequently the present crisis is beginning to be looked upon as the last struggle of the old society against the new.

As regards the great question as to what is to be done when the Marshal finds himself finally defeated by the Chamber, the party now triumphant talk of the use of military force. The Marshal has often declared to his friends that nothing shall induce him to resort to an extralegal use of force, but the wilder spirits of the party say that if the Marshal will not use the army, a general will be found with less scruple, and they hint at Ducrot.[144] But this would be falling into the most fatal of all systems, that of military pronunciamentos. The Marshal himself might do a great deal with the army, and would probably keep it together, but it does not by any means follow that any one general seizing power in Paris would be submitted to by the rest. It is believed that even now, General Berthaut,[145] the Minister of War, was with difficulty induced to remain in office, and yielded only to the Marshal's special request, on condition that he should be relieved in the autumn.

It is however to be hoped that all this talk about military coups d'état is simply talk; and that we shall get out of this difficulty quietly at last. In the meantime the upper ten thousand in Paris are indulging themselves in all sorts of illusions, and the Paris shopkeepers are dreaming of the restoration of a Court and of a great expenditure on luxuries.

The Chambers met again in June, and although the country was perfectly quiet, the scenes which took place in the Chamber of Deputies were a sufficient indication of the fury with which the politicians regarded each other. The violent and disorderly conduct was chiefly on the side of the Right, there being a certain number of Bonapartists who provoked disturbances with the object of discrediting Parliamentary Government as much as possible.

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On the other hand even the moderate men on the Left began to talk of revolutionary measures to be adopted when they got back into power again, such as the suspension of the irremovability of judges, the impeachment of Ministers, and the dissolution of religious congregations. On June 22, the dissolution was voted by the Senate by a majority of twenty. It was decided that the elections should be held in three months' time, and both parties made their preparations for an uncompromising fight, Marshal MacMahon beginning the campaign with an order of the day to the army which smacked disagreeably of a *coup d'état*, not to say a *pronunciamento*.[146] Subsequently, having been assured of the support of the Comte de Chambord—a somewhat questionable advantage—he proceeded on an electoral tour in the South.

The general election took place in October, and resulted in the crushing defeat of the Marshal and his Ministers in spite of the labours of prefects, magistrates, mayors, policemen, and priests, who had all been temporarily converted into electioneering agents. The exasperation of parties reached an almost unprecedented point, and Décazes admitted that the country was in a state of moral civil war. The partisans of the Government talked of a second dissolution,

[144] Auguste-Alexandre Ducrot (1817 – 1882) was a French general. He served in the Crimean War, Algeria, the Italian campaign of 1859, and as a division commander in the Franco-Prussian War.
[145] Jean Auguste Berthaut (1817 – 1881) was a French soldier and politician. He was appointed Minister of War, in the government of Jules Dufaure
[146] A formal public political declaration

of proclaiming a state of siege during the new elections and conducting them with even more administrative vigour than the last. The Republicans announced their determination to annul the elections of all the official candidates and to impeach the Ministers and even the Marshal himself, if he did not retire or name a Ministry having their confidence. As for the Marshal himself,

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he found little support at this crisis from the monarchical parties, except on the part of the Orleanists, who saw that he must be kept in at all hazards; but the Orleanists had recognized that France, for the moment at least, was Republican, and their press owned openly that to persist in Personal Government instead of reverting to Constitutional Government was to march to certain disaster. The Marshal, in fact, found himself confronted with two alternatives: either he must accept Gambetta's demand to submit or resign; or he must run the risk of getting rid of his difficulties by means of a coup d'état.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Oct. 26, 1877.

> The prospect does not grow clearer, though I see, or at all events like to fancy I see, a cooling down of the fury which prevailed a week ago.
>
> The Marshal is supposed to be a man of one idea, and his one idea at the present moment is said to be that he is bound to remain at his post.
>
> This idea might lead him to name a Ministry from the majority, but then he would have to dismiss all the Fourtou prefects, whom he solemnly promised to stand by.
>
> On the other hand, the idea might carry him on to a *coup d'état*.
>
> The plan devised by his opponents, and indeed by some of his friends, for getting him out of the scrape, is that the Senate should refuse to support him in extreme measures, and that he should then declare (which would indeed be true) that he had never promised to stay in opposition to both branches of the Legislature.
>
> Communications which have been going on between the Elysée and the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier,[147] the President of the Senate, are said to have shown that the Senate cannot be depended upon either to vote a second dissolution, or to carry on the Government in conjunction with the Marshal, and without the Chamber of Deputies.

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> I register as rumours, strongly requiring confirmation, that the Marshal has summoned the *Chasseurs d'Afrique*[148] to reinforce the garrison of Paris; that in consequence of disagreements between Grévy and Gambetta, the Republicans offer the Presidency of

[147] Edme-Armand-Gaston, 1st Duke of Audiffret-Pasquier (1823 – 1905), known as Gaston Audiffret-Pasquier, was a French politician. After the fall of Thiers, Audiffret-Pasquier directed the negotiations between the different royalist parties to establish the Comte de Chambord as King of France, but as Chambord refused to give up the white flag of the Bourbons in favour of the tricolor, the project failed.
[148] Light cavalry of the French army in North Africa.

> the Republic to General Chanzy,[149] the Governor-General of Algeria; that the more moderate Liberals have hopes of bringing in the Duc d'Aumale as President, if MacMahon should actually retire.
>
> As the population is disarmed and there is no National Guard, there can be no need to increase the numbers of the garrison of Paris. If any fresh troops were really brought up, it would be from mistrust of the spirit of those already here.
>
> Gambetta must have departed very far from his usual political tact, if he has set up claims in opposition to Grévy. Grévy would be quite alarming enough, and to establish the doctrine that the President must be a general would bring France to the level of a South American Republic.
>
> It would be a curious result of an election, in which the Orleans or Right Centre Party has met with a signal defeat, that an Orleans Prince should be placed at the head of the State.

The proper course for the Marshal to have adopted was to have accepted the position of a Constitutional President; to have appointed a Ministry which would have obtained a majority in the Chamber; and to have restrained it from excesses by the exercise of his legitimate authority, and by means of the power of the Senate. Instead of this, however, he first attempted to form a Ministry of the same colour as the old one; then tried to meet the Chamber with his old Ministers, and finally fell back upon perfectly unknown people who carried no weight at all, and who professed to represent no party. To this Ministry the Chamber refused

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to pay any attention, and after many threats in the Elysée organs to violate all laws; to collect and spend money without the sanction of Parliament, to suppress newspapers, and to proclaim a state of siege, the Marshal surrendered ignominiously in December, and accepted a Ministry in which M. Dufaure[150] was President of the Council, and M. Waddington,[151] Minister for Foreign Affairs. Thus, what should have been a natural and proper consequence of the elections was converted into an humiliating defeat, and there had been such a series of solemn declarations, none of them adhered to, that all confidence in the Marshal had disappeared. Of the more important members of the new Government, M. Dufaure was a lawyer with Conservative leanings. M. Waddington, who had been educated at Rugby and Cambridge, was intimate with Lord Lyons and the Embassy generally, but it was doubtful whether his connection with England would prove an advantage, as he might find it necessary

[149] Antoine Eugène Alfred Chanzy (1823 – 1883) was a French general, a commander during the Franco-Prussian War and a governor of Algeria.
[150] Jules Armand Stanislas Dufaure (1798 – 1881) was a French statesman who served three non-consecutive terms as Prime Minister of France. Early in 1879, Dufaure took part in compelling the resignation of Patrice MacMahon, duc de Magenta, but immediately afterwards on 1st February, worn out by opposition, he retired. As Prime Minister, he served as the Acting President of the Republic on 30 January 1879.
[151] William Henry Waddington (1826 – 1894) was a French statesman who served as Prime Minister in 1879, and as an Ambassador of France to London. He was born at the Château of Saint-Rémy in Eure-et-Loir, the son of a rich British industrialist, Thomas Waddington, whose family had established a large cotton manufacturing business in France.

to demonstrate that he was not too English. M. Léon Say,[152] the Minister of Finance, was supposed to be a Free Trader; and M. de Freycinet,[153] who was destined to take part in many subsequent administrations, had been Gambetta's Under-Secretary of State for War, and was looked upon as Gambetta's representative in the Cabinet.

On December 17, MacMahon gave Lord Lyons his version of the history of the crisis.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Dec. 18, 1877.

> I went to the weekly evening party at the Elysée last Saturday. The Marshal took me aside, saying: "I want to tell you why I did it." He proceeded to tell me that he had been led to remain

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> in office and make a Parliamentary Ministry, by a warning he had received from abroad that if he retired, or if he established a clerical Ministry, war would be the inevitable consequence.
>
> So far the Marshal: what follows may be mere gossip.
>
> On the afternoon of December 12, the Marshal had quite determined *d'aller jusqu'au bout;*[154] either to obtain from the Senate a dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, or to give in his resignation. He was in consultation with General Rochebouet,[155] who was at the time Prime Minister, about drawing up a message in this sense, when a letter was brought in, the bearer of which sent in a message begging that the Marshal would receive him at once. The letter was either written by the German Emperor, or at all events it convinced the Marshal that the bearer was sent to give him a message direct from His Imperial Majesty. The Marshal accordingly received him alone, and he said he was a Prussian officer who had been sent by the Emperor to entreat the Marshal to remain at the head of the Republic, at all risks, and on any conditions; and not to establish a Government which could be represented as being clerical. The message is said to have represented that the Emperor himself was most anxious for peace, but that he should not be able to restrain 'other people,' if a clerical or a radical Government were allowed to be established in France.
>
> This sounds so like gossip that I should hardly have thought it worth while to repeat it, if it had not tallied rather curiously with the statement the Marshal himself volunteered to make to me about his motives.

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[152] Jean-Baptiste-Léon Say (1826 – 1896) was a French banker, statesman and diplomat. One of the noted economists of the 19th century, he served as French Finance Minister from 1872 until 1883. He also served as an ambassador in London.

[153] Charles Louis de Saulces de Freycinet (1828 – 1923) was a French statesman who served four times as Prime Minister during the Third Republic. He also served an important term as Minister of War (1888 – 1893). He belonged to the Moderate Republican faction.

[154] To go all the way.

[155] Gaëtan de Grimaudet, comte de Rochebouët (1813 – 1899) was a French general who served as Prime Minister for less than a month in late 1877.

> The "other people" are supposed to be neither more nor less than one other person—Prince Bismarck—and the message is represented as having been sent by the Emperor William without the knowledge of the Chancellor, or of the German Ambassador here.
>
> Prince Bismarck's enemies, and they are of course numerous enough here, like to argue from appearances that he has quite lost the confidence of the Emperor, and some of them, who profess to have peculiar means of obtaining information, say that he made three conditions with the Emperor, as those on which alone he could continue to serve him. 1st, that he should have

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> *carte blanche*[156]in the Government; 2nd, that the Empress should reside at Coblentz or Baden rather than at Berlin; and 3rd, that certain people, of whom he gave a list, should be removed from Court. As a natural consequence, Bismarck's illness is attributed to his not having obtained the consent of his Imperial Master to his conditions; and it is said that he will not recover until his terms are complied with. This story of the conditions appears to me to be a very outrageous one, and I am quite unable to say whether there is any admixture of truth in it. Those who recount it, love to draw from it prognostications of the fall of the Great Chancellor.

Whether the story of the Marshal's mysterious visitor was true or not, his defeat marked a decisive epoch in French internal politics; the Republic was now firmly established and cannot be said to have been in any dangers since, unless the vagaries of the impostor Boulanger[157] be excepted.

Ever since the beginning of the war between Russia and Turkey, Lord Derby had continually asserted that it was practically no concern of ours, and that he was quite determined not to be drawn into any intervention whatsoever. But as the Turkish resistance collapsed, and as it became more and more evident that there was nothing to prevent the Russians from exacting any terms they chose, unless some form of intervention took place, Her Majesty's Government decided to call Parliament together. Lord Derby was anxious to explain that this action had no sinister significance.

Lord Derby to Lord Lyons.
Dec. 21, 1877.

> You are not unlikely to be asked the meaning of Parliament being called together earlier than usual. The explanation is simple. We see a growing excitement on the question of the war; we

[156] A free hand

[157] Georges Ernest Jean-Marie Boulanger (1837 – 1891), nicknamed Général Revanche ("General Revenge"), was a French Army officer and politician. An enormously popular public figure during the second decade of the Third Republic, he won multiple elections. At the zenith of his popularity in January 1889, he was feared to be powerful enough to establish himself as dictator. He advocated *revanche* (revenge on Germany), *révision* (revision of the constitution), and *restauration* (restoration of the monarchy).

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> are menaced by an agitation friendly but troublesome, having for object to drive us into war, and with a counter movement on the other side. We think that much useless talk will be stopped; the real opinion of the country be tested, and the Ministry relieved from the annoyance of perpetual criticism which it cannot reply to, if every peer and M.P. can say what he has got to say at Westminster, rather than at a county dinner or borough meeting.
>
> Those who have confidence in us will not be sorry to hear our views explained by ourselves; those who have not, will have no further opportunity of talking mysteriously about the country being committed to this, that, or the other, without Parliament having a voice in the matter. For it is clear that if we meant to act on our own responsibility, and leave Parliament no choice except to ratify or to condemn what we had done, we should not shorten by one-half the interval that remains during which only such action is possible.
>
> It is possible that there may be in France some renewal of suspicions as to English designs on Egypt. If so, you may dispel them by the most decided language you can use. We want nothing and will take nothing from Egypt except what we have already, and what other Powers share equally with us. We shall continue to work in harmony with the French, and hope and expect the same from them.

Lord Derby was the most cautious and unenterprising of men, and he already perhaps felt some suspicions as to the soundness of his colleagues in the Cabinet; but the assurance to be given to the French Government with regard to Egypt seems, on the face of it, somewhat gratuitous, if not rash. The situation in Turkey might have resulted in our being forced to go to Egypt at short notice, and only five years later he, Lord Derby, found himself a member of a Liberal Government which had been forced to adopt that very course.

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When the British Parliament met in January the war was already practically ended, and the commissioners were treating for an armistice and for the preliminaries of peace. The Queen's Speech announced that although neither the Russians nor the Turks had infringed the conditions on which the neutrality of England depended, it might be necessary to ask for money and to take precautions, and on January 23, the Mediterranean fleet was ordered to pass the Dardanelles and to proceed to Constantinople. This action brought about the resignation of both Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon,[158] but upon the countermanding of the order to the fleet, Lord Derby resumed office. On January 28, the basis of the peace negotiations having been communicated, the Government asked for a vote of six millions, and in consequence of alarming intelligence, received from Mr. Layard[159] the British Ambassador at Constantinople, the fleet was again ordered definitely to proceed to that city.

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[158] Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon (1831 – 1890), known as Lord Porchester from 1833 to 1849, was a British politician and a leading member of the Conservative Party. He was twice Secretary of State for the Colonies and also served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland

[159] Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817 – 1894) was an English Assyriologist, traveller, cuneiformist, art historian, draughtsman, collector, politician and diplomat. He was born to a mostly English family in Paris and largely raised in Italy. He is best known as the excavator of Nimrud and of Nineveh, where he uncovered a large proportion of the Assyrian palace reliefs known, and in 1851 the library of Ashurbanipal. In 1877, he was appointed by Lord Beaconsfield to be Ambassador at Constantinople, where he remained until Gladstone's return to power in 1880.

Political excitement reached its climax, and light-hearted Jingoes, quite incapable of realizing the inadequacy of British military resources, proclaimed their readiness to fight any possible adversary.

If it eventually became necessary for England to take active steps to secure her interests in the East, it was quite clear that no assistance whatever could be expected from France. M. Waddington took an early opportunity to assure Lord Lyons most emphatically that France wanted nothing for herself, and that she desired no acquisition of territory either in the Mediterranean or elsewhere; but whilst he disclaimed any desire of this nature, he showed in a most unmistakable manner that an occupation of Egypt by England

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would create a bitter feeling in France which would long impair the friendly relations between the two countries. Speaking most confidentially, M. Waddington said that it was all important to France that England and Russia should not be involved in hostilities, and that France should not be left *tête-à-tête* with Prince Bismarck, whether the latter played the part of an enemy or a tempter. In fact, the French Government, like its predecessor, was disquieted by a notion that Bismarck intended to propose to France some arrangement respecting Belgium and Holland, which would dismember those States, assigning of course to Germany the lion's share of the spoils, and it seemed to be apprehended that France would be called upon to choose between acquiescing in such an arrangement or incurring the active enmity of Germany. The fear of the French that they might become involved was so strong that Waddington was alarmed even at the idea of committing his Government to the British declaration as to the invalidity of treaties concluded without the participation of the Powers; but, in spite of this timorous spirit, and although the Treaty of San Stefano[160] was not signed until March 3, Lord Derby informed Lord Lyons on February 2, that, the support of Austria having been obtained, Her Majesty's Government were determined to secure a Conference, and it was hoped that Italy and France would also exercise at least a benevolent neutrality. The uncertainty of the position was shown in Lord Derby's language with regard to Constantinople. "I hardly know what will happen if the Russians insist on showing themselves at Constantinople. It is not a case we could make a *casus belli* of, but I think it would in that case be desirable that the Neutral Powers should be present too—that is their

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fleets —both as a demonstration, and to keep order if necessary. The war being over, such a proceeding could not be misconstrued, as it certainly would have been before. All this, however, is uncertain."

Judging by subsequent experiences, Lord Derby would have spent a long time in securing the presence of the International fleets at Constantinople, and would have experienced still more trouble in persuading them to take any action. The Russians fortunately stopped short of Constantinople, and a Conference being now a practical certainty, Lord Lyons was invited to act as the British representative.

[160] The 1878 Treaty of San Stefano was between the Russian and Ottoman empires at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878. It was signed at San Stefano, then a village west of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), on 3 March [O.S. 19 February] 1878 by Count Nicholas Pavlovich Ignatiev and Aleksandr Nelidov on behalf of the Russian Empire and by Foreign Minister Saffet Pasha and Ambassador to Germany Sadullah Pasha on behalf of the Ottoman Empire

Lord Derby to Lord Lyons.
February 6, 1878.

The Conference will probably come off, and it may come off soon, though there is a chance of delay from differences as to the place of meeting.

I find the feeling of the Cabinet unanimous, and I fully share it, that you are the fittest person to attend the Conference on our behalf. Indeed, I know of no one in whom I should have equal confidence for a duty of that kind. Nothing has been said to the Queen, but I have no doubt of Her Majesty's consent.

May I ask you if, considering the importance and difficulty of the work, you will be prepared to sacrifice your personal convenience so far as to accept the office if offered? I fear the sacrifice will be considerable, but let up hope that the result will repay your trouble.

To most people, an invitation of this character, conveyed in so flattering a manner, would have had an irresistible attraction; but Lord Lyons was one of those persons to whom notoriety was indifferent, if not

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obnoxious, and who much preferred to confine himself to doing his own business in a practical and unostentatious spirit. He, however, felt it his duty to accept, hoping vainly all the time that the Conference would never take place at all.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Feb. 8, 1878.

I wish to offer you my best thanks for your letter of the day before yesterday. Your proposal to appoint me to represent England at the Conference is very flattering in itself, and nothing could be more gratifying than the terms in which it is made.

You were so kind as to speak of the sacrifice of my personal convenience, but that consideration I will set entirely aside. There are feelings of much greater weight which make me shrink from the task, and it appears to me to be a task peculiarly difficult, and one of which the result is, to say the least, extremely doubtful. I may say, too, without any affectation of modesty, that I do not think myself well qualified for it.

Still these are after all personal considerations which I ought not to allow to interfere with any public duty which I may be called upon to discharge. If therefore the Queen and the Government should determine upon entrusting this mission to me, I should undertake it heartily and zealously, and do my best to justify their confidence.

Of course nothing can be settled until we know the rank and number of the Plenipotentiaries of other Powers, the place of meeting, and other particulars, which may have a material influence in the selection of the Representative or Representatives of Her Majesty.

If however the progress of events should ultimately lead to my being chosen, I should be very grateful if you would allow me the opportunity of conferring with you upon various matters, before any definite arrangements are made. There is one to which I attach so much importance that I will mention it at once. I trust that you will allow me to choose myself the staff to accompany me on the occasion. My efficiency and comfort would depend mainly on this.

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Apart from a disinclination to leave his own work, Lord Lyons probably considered that the outlook for England at a Conference was by no means reassuring. The issue of the Conference really depended upon the military position in which England and Austria would apparently stand, should the Conference itself break up *rê infectâ*,[161] and at the end of February the English position looked to be none too favourable, for it depended upon the fleet having access to the Black Sea. If we were able to stop the Russian communications by sea, the Russians would be at the mercy of Austria by land, supposing Andrassy's boasts to be well founded; but we had no absolute security against the Russians occupying Gallipoli at any moment, and no semblance of a security of their not occupying the Black Sea exit of the Bosphorus, for the Turks were at their mercy, and, as pointed out by Mr. Layard, they were quite capable of making any arrangement with Russia, since they considered that they had been betrayed and abandoned by England. Neither, it might be added, was there any security that Austria would stand firm, for there was always the chance of her being bought off with Bosnia and the Herzegovina.

Lord Lyons to Lord Derby.
Paris, Feb. 26, 1878.

As to the Conference itself all seems more than ever in doubt. Unless the Austrians are determined to go to war and are visibly ready, and unless we are equally determined and equally ready on our side, and unless the Russians are convinced of this, there can be no chance of their making any concessions. Then, what will the Austrians want? To bolster up the Turks, to waste

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energy in trying to place under them again this or that district delivered by the Russians, would be a very losing game. There must, I suppose, be some new Principality or Principalities. If anything like a national feeling and a national Government can be established in them, their danger will be from Russia, and Russia will become their natural enemy, unless they are thrown into her arms by a hostility on the part of Austria, which will make them feel that Russia alone is their defence against Turkey. Then there are the Straits, and the difficulty of placing the Turks, or whoever is to hold them, in a position to guard them against a Russian coup de main at least. Ignatieff seems to be already working the connection between Egypt and the Porte, with a view to getting money out of Egypt for Russia. I am inclined to think that the more radically Egypt is severed from the Porte, and the less our free action with regard to it is hampered by collective guarantees or collective Protectorates the safer we shall be.

[161] The matter being unfinished.

The correctness of these views has since been amply demonstrated by the history of the Balkan States. The opinion about Egypt, however, was probably not at all to the taste of Lord Derby, who appeared to rejoice in divided responsibility.

Lord Lyons himself was summoned to London early in March in order to confer with the Government respecting his procedure at Berlin, and judging from his letters to various correspondents, the course which Her Majesty's Government proposed to adopt was in a state of considerable uncertainty. It was, however, a source of much satisfaction to him that he would have the co-operation of Lord Odo Russell, who was an intimate friend, and in whose judgment he felt complete confidence. He also got his way about his staff, which was to include amongst others, Malet,[162] Sheffield, and Mr. (now Sir William) Barrington.[163]

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Lord Lyons to Lord Odo Russell.
London, March 13, 1878.

> My only comfort about this awful Congress or Conference is that you will be my partner in it. I hope, if it does come off after all, that we may get over it without doing harm to our country or to ourselves. I wanted them to set me aside and take advantage of the transfer to Berlin to put it into your hands; and I still think this would be the best plan; but they say that after their announcement of my appointment to Parliament, they cannot cancel it. Sir Robert Peel[164] has moved a resolution that I am not a fit person to represent England at the Conference. I shall console myself if he carries it. He grounds his motion upon 'my well-known opinions.' I suppose he takes my opinions from a wholly unauthorized and incorrect account of them which appeared in a letter in the Daily Telegraph yesterday. Some people suppose he wrote the letter himself in order to have a peg to hang his motion on. I don't think your difficulties at the Conference will arise from strong preconceived opinions of mine. I shall try and get our instructions made as precise as possible. Could you give me some hints as to the particular points which should be decided before we begin? You will know how far certain solutions in our sense will be feasible or not. It is worse than useless that we should be told to aim at impossibilities, and have to yield: though there may be of course conditions, which if not admitted, will render it necessary for us to retire from the Conference altogether.

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[162] Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, 4th Baronet (1837 – 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 Lord Lyons.

[163] Sir William Augustus Curzon Barrington (1842 – 1922) was a British diplomat. He joined the Diplomatic Service in 1860. After four years he was promoted to a 3rd secretary and in 1870 to a 2nd secretary. He was sent as secretary of legation to Buenos Aires in 1883 and was transferred to Budapest as consul-general two years later.

[164] Sir Robert Peel, 3rd Baronet, (1822 – 1895) was a British Peelite, Liberal and from 1884 until 1886 Conservative Member of Parliament. 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." Lord Newton, no doubt, had the measure of the man from his own experience in parliament.

I am sure you will be the greatest help and comfort to me, and I hope I may be a help to you. Please tell me anything you wish me to do or say here.

Lord Odo Russell appears to have been equally in the dark as to the intended policy of Her Majesty's Government.

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Lord Odo Russell to Lord Lyons.
Berlin, March 16, 1878.

The feelings you express concerning the Conference are so entirely my own that I need say no more, and only hope that Lord Derby will give you a better qualified assistant than I can be with regard to Oriental Affairs, of which I do not really know enough to be of any use to you or to the country, beside such authorities as Ignatieff, Lobanoff,[165] Calice,[166] Radowitz,[167] Busch, etc., etc.

You ask if I could give you some hints as to the particular points which should be decided before you begin.

I would do so with the greatest pleasure, if I only knew what the policy of Her Majesty's Government is likely to be in Congress. All I know about it at present is contained in Lord Derby's despatch of May 6, and as far as Constantinople and the Straits are concerned, I fancy Russia will be conciliatory.

You ask further how far certain solutions in our sense will be feasible or not.

I wish I could answer your question, but can only beg of you to tell me first whether we accept the consequences of our neutrality, or whether we contest them: whether we are going to reject the Turko-Russian Treaty, as we rejected the Berlin Memorandum, or whether we are going to accept now what we refused then.

Russia is now in possession of Turkey. Germany supports Russia.

France and Italy have no wish to quarrel with Russia or Germany, and will not offer any serious opposition to the Turko-Russian Treaty.

Austria may object to two things: the proposed limits of Bulgaria, and the prolonged occupation of Russian troops.

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[165] Prince Aleksey Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky (1824 – 1896) was a Russian statesman, best remembered for having concluded the Li-Lobanov Treaty with China, the Peace of Constantinople with the Ottoman Empire, and for his publication of the Russian Genealogical Book (in two volumes).
[166] Baron Calice in Lord Newton's index. Henry Joseph Aloys Count of Calice, (1831 – 1912). In 1874 he became an Austrian diplomatic agent in Bucharest, participated in the conference of Constantinople in 1876 as an extraordinary envoy and second representative and served as section chief of the ministry of the exterior in the central management in 1877 – 80. This year he became ambassador in Constantinople and promoted the difficult diplomatic relations with the Porte for 26 years.
[167] Joseph Maria Friedrich von Radowitz (1839 – 1912) was a German diplomat who served as acting Foreign Secretary and head of the Foreign Office from 6 November 1879 until 17 April 1880.

> If Russia is well disposed, she will consent to a smaller Bulgaria and to a shorter occupation.
>
> If she doesn't, Austria must choose between a diplomatic defeat, a compromise, or war to turn

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> Russia out of Bulgaria. Bismarck will exert all his personal influence in favour of a compromise to keep the three Emperors' Alliance together before Europe in Conference assembled.
>
> The annexation of Armenia and the war indemnity are questions which Russia will scarcely consent to submit to the Congress at all.
>
> What then is our attitude to be? Please let me know as soon as you can, and I will do my best to answer your questions.
>
> If we go in for Greek interests we shall have the cordial support of Germany and Austria, I think—but Greek interests are in direct opposition to Turkish interests, if I am not greatly mistaken.
>
> On hearing of your appointment I wrote to you to congratulate myself and to beg of you to grant us the happiness of taking up your quarters at the Embassy, and also to advise you to bring a numerous and efficient staff, as I have not hands enough at Berlin for an emergency.

The letters of Lord Odo Russell at this period show that he was completely in the dark as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government, and that he was quite unable to get any answer as to what was to be their policy with regard to the Treaty of San Stefano. He himself was convinced that the three Empires had already settled what the result of the Congress was to be, and that they simply intended to communicate it to Greece, Roumania, and other Powers for whom they wished to manifest their contempt, such as France and England, *à prendre ou à laisser.*[168] Under these circumstances, it became doubtful whether it was worth while for England to go into a Conference at all and court unnecessary humiliation, serious as the responsibility would be if such a course were decided upon.

There can be no doubt that much of the prevailing uncertainty was due to Lord Derby, who with great

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difficulty had contrived to keep pace with his more enterprising colleagues, and whose over-cautious temperament had prevented the adoption of any really definite policy. But Lord Derby, unable to stand the shock of seeing a few thousand Indian troops sent to the Mediterranean, resigned office on March 28, and the advent of Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office marked a new departure in British Foreign Policy.

Lord Salisbury's circular of April 1st 1878, was intended to show that the Treaty of San Stefano threatened the interests of Europe, and that the whole, and not parts of it, as proposed

[168] Take it or leave it.

by Russia, should be submitted to the Congress. It pointed out that the creation of a big Bulgaria, stretching over the greater part of the Balkan Peninsula, and with ports on the Black Sea and the Ægean, would give Russia a predominant influence; that the proposed annexations in Asia Minor would give Russia control over political and commercial conditions in that region, and that the exaction of an indemnity which it was impossible for Turkey to provide, would enable Russia either to exact further cessions of territory or to impose any other conditions which might be thought advisable. The logic was sound, and at all events Lord Salisbury succeeded in producing a definite British policy, which his predecessor had signally failed to do.

When Lord Lyons returned to Paris at the beginning of April the question of whether there was to be a Congress or not was still in suspense. French opinion was rather more in favour of England on the Eastern Question than had been expected, but there was no sign of anything more than passive sympathy, and

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Waddington, who was particularly sensitive on the subject, intimated, not obscurely, that the good will of France depended upon England not acting independently of her in Egypt. It looked, in fact, as if England would be left to bell the cat,[169] although Lord Salisbury's circular, as was generally admitted, had immensely raised British prestige on the continent. The suspicion felt in France as to Russian intentions was shown by the failure of agents of the Russian Government to negotiate a loan at Paris for thirty millions sterling, and Lord Salisbury's letters in the early part of April show that, while there were symptoms of yielding in Europe, there appeared to be no prospect of those concessions with regard to Asia Minor to which Her Majesty's Government attached great importance.

On the whole, the French Government was apparently anxious to act as far as possible with England, without committing itself too much, since the idea of a Russian naval station in the Mediterranean was highly obnoxious; but Waddington was hampered, amongst other causes, by the proceedings of Gambetta, who was disporting himself in some of the European capitals with the object of forming, or appearing to form, relations with foreign statesmen, which would enable him to put forward a claim to become eventually Minister for Foreign Affairs. Waddington always in private repudiated responsibility for what Gambetta said or did, but the latter was now so important a personage that it was necessary to keep on good terms with him and to submit to a patronage which must have been irksome to French Ministers.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, April 24, 1878.

> The negotiations for the simultaneous withdrawal of the fleet and army from Constantinople

[169] 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.

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proceed very slowly. We are making no difficulties, but the Russians cannot make up their minds about details, and are probably trying to screw some concessions out of the luckless Turks. I shall be very glad to see the arrangement succeed, because our fleet is doing no possible good there at this moment. Whatever value it had, disappeared as soon as the peace was signed. But as the Russians seem to be afraid of it, we must make the most of it. Possibly, in their secret hearts, they entertain very much the same opinion as to the position of their armies.

The general negotiations do not improve. Russia gives me the impression of a Government desperately anxious for peace, and driven on by some fate towards war. Andrassy undoubtedly means to have Bosnia; but whether he will be satisfied with that I am not so certain. It is a possible policy for him to throw the Danube over altogether; to secure an outlet for his produce by a railway to Salonika, and to accept a simultaneous extension southward in parallel lines of Austrian and Russian possession—whether in the form of actual territory, or of vassal states. In that case, he will throw us over, and his course will be easy enough if he can square the Hungarians. But that may be a difficulty. Do you gather any information about his objects?

Is it your impression—as it is mine—that the French are supremely anxious to push us into war?

Lord Lyons's reply to these inquiries gives the reasons why the French views with regard to an Anglo-Russian conflict had undergone an alteration.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury
Paris, April 26, 1878.

I owe you many thanks for your letter of the day before yesterday.

You ask me whether it is my impression that the French are extremely anxious to push us into war.

Confidence in their returning military strength, and the apparent success of their endeavours to

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conciliate Germany have calmed their fears of Bismarck. They are no longer nervously desirous that the forces of England should be kept in the west, as a necessary check upon the great Chancellor's supposed designs upon Holland, upon Belgium, or upon France herself. On the other hand, they have given up counting upon Russia as an ally against Germany, and have abandoned Décazes's policy of courting her and espousing her interests. The result of all this is that they are willing enough that the main force of England should be employed at a distance from home.

They have been reassured about Egypt, and they think that if England is engaged in hostilities with Russia, she will be less disposed and less able to interfere with France or to separate from her in Egyptian affairs. They have lost their great fear, which was that England, instead of opposing Russia, would seek a compensation for herself in

the annexation of Egypt. Thus another of the reasons which made them desire that England should abstain from all action has disappeared.

There are, moreover, the patriots, who look far ahead, who do positively desire that England should go to war with Russia. Their calculation is that Austria and Italy would sooner or later be drawn into the war on the English side, and that then, Germany and Russia being isolated, France might join the rest of Europe against them, and recover Alsace and Lorraine. These are said to be the views of Gambetta and his friends.

There is, however, one feeling which pervades the great mass of Frenchmen. They wish England to take the chestnuts out of the fire for them. They are quite determined not to go to war themselves for anything less than Alsace and Lorraine, but they do wish to exclude Russia from the Mediterranean, and they are very willing that the danger and the burthen of effecting this should be incurred by England.

With these views their newspapers go on patting us on the back, and may continue to do so, as long as we seem to be ready to act alone; but they would change their note, if they saw any risk of France being drawn into the war with us, until after Austria and Italy had joined us.

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I know of nothing to confirm Odo Russell's information that in return for the consent of Germany and Russia to exclude Egypt, etc., from the deliberations of the Congress, Waddington engaged to support Germany and Russia in everything else. What appeared on the surface was that this exclusion was made openly by France a *sine qua non*[170] of her attending the Congress, that she communicated the condition simultaneously to all the Powers, and did not at all ask for the assent to it as a concession. If there is only Bismarckian authority for the bargain stated to have been made by Waddington with Germany and Russia, I think it *mérite* confirmation. The one object of Bismarck seems always to be to sow dissensions between France and any other Power that she may seem to be approaching.

Notwithstanding the Comte de St. Vallier's[171] assertion to Odo Russell, Mr. Adams is quite certain that it was M. de St. Vallier himself who reported to Mr. Waddington that Odo had communicated to the Emperor William, Prince Bismarck, *etc.,* a telegram from Mr. Adams on the subject of the sympathies of France with England. In fact Mr. Waddington who is an old schoolfellow and friend of Mr. Adams, read to him parts of the private letter from M. de St. Vallier in which the report was contained, and indeed one of the phrases he cited from the letter was *le telegramme* Adams as the source of the communication made by Odo Russell.

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[170] Without this nothing.

[171] Charles Raymond de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier, Count of Saint-Vallier (1833 – 1886) was a French politician and diplomat. A supporter of the Dufaure Ministry, he was called upon to succeed, as ambassador in Berlin, M. de Gontaut-Biron (20 December 1877). In June 1878, he was one of the two plenipotentiaries of France at the Berlin Congress for the settlement of the question of the East. He resigned as ambassador at the constitution of the Gambetta cabinet, and, laid off, returned to sit (December 1881) in the centre left of the Senate.

The Prince of Wales arrived this morning and I have been all the afternoon at the Exhibition with him, which obliges me to write in such haste, that I cannot be brief.

I have just seen Hobart Pasha,[172] who goes on to England to-morrow morning and will try to see you.
I doubt whether Waddington or the Austrian Ambassador here get any information about Andrassy's real views and objects.

The Russians seem to be hard at work trying to make the execution of the Treaty of San Stefano a *fait accompli*. *Beati possidentes*.[173]

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Lord Salisbury's suspicions as to the pressure being put upon the unfortunate Turks by the Russians were confirmed by an interesting letter from Mr. Layard to Lord Lyons, in which the much-denounced Abdul Hamid appears in quite a new light.

Mr. Austen Henry Layard to Lord Lyons
Constantinople, May 1, 1878.

I am not surprised that Waddington should care nothing about Armenia. The question is a purely English one, but to us a vital one. The Treaty of San Stefano puts the whole of Asia Minor virtually at the mercy of Russia and insures her influence over Mesopotamia and perhaps ultimately over Syria, which would probably not be pleasant to the French. This immense addition to the power of Russia in Asia, and the command that she obtains, if the Treaty be carried out, of routes to India and Central Asia, is a matter of serious import to England. But probably there is no European Power which does not envy us the possession of India, and would not secretly rejoice at the prospect of our losing it. I believe this feeling to be particularly strong with Frenchmen. But if we intend to preserve our Empire as it now is, we must be prepared to deal with this question of Russian aggrandisement in Asia Minor and drive them back. Our only way of doing so, is by making use of the Mussulman population. The idea of an autonomous Christian Armenia to form a barrier to Russian advance is one of those absurdities which are cropping up daily amongst our sentimental politicians, who know nothing of the matters upon which they pretend to lay down the law.

The Grand Duke Nicholas,[174] before going, made an ultimate attempt to bully the Sultan into surrendering Shumla, Varna and Batoum; but His Majesty held firm and

[172] Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden (1822 – 1886) was an English-born Ottoman admiral (hence widely known as Hobart Pasha). Hobart-Hampden was born at Walton-on-the-Wolds in Leicestershire, the third son of the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire. In 1867 he became naval adviser to the Ottoman Sultan by his brother's recommendation. He was immediately nominated to the command of that fleet, with the rank of "Bahriye Livasi" (rear-admiral). In this capacity he performed splendid service in helping to suppress the insurrection in Crete, and was rewarded by the Sultan with the title of Pasha (1869). In 1874 Hobart, whose name had, on representations made by Greece, been removed from the British Navy Directory, was reinstated; his restoration did not, however, last long, for on the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war he again entered Ottoman service.
[173] Literally, blessed are the possessors. Anyone else must prove their claim
[174] Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich of Russia (1856 – 1929) was a Russian grand duke and World War I general, a son of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich and a grandson of Emperor Nicholas I.

> His Imperial Highness failed to get a promise out of him on the subject. It is curious that whilst our ignorant and unscrupulous newspaper correspondents are systematically writing down the Sultan and denouncing him as a poor weak creature incapable of having an opinion of his own, he has shown far more firmness than any of his Ministers. Had it not been for him, it is highly probable

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> that the ironclads would have been given over to the Russians, and more than probable that the Grand Duke would have been allowed to occupy Buyuk Dere and the entrance to the Bosphorus. The Russians threaten to seize Varna, Shumla and Batoum by force, but I much doubt whether they will venture to do so, as right is not on their side. Shumla and Varna are not to be given up to Russia, but to the Bulgarian Principality when constituted: and the arrangements for the final settlement of the Russian frontier in Asia are to be made within six months of the conclusion of the "definitive" not the "preliminary" Treaty.
>
> I am anxiously waiting to hear whether the simultaneous withdrawal of our fleet and the Russian forces can be arranged. It is of the utmost importance to the Turks to get the Russians away from San Stefano, but I cannot understand how the Russians could consent to give up so advantageous a position, unless they found that if they remained there they would be exposed to considerable danger from a joint attack by the English fleet and the Turkish forces.

Layard, who was a fighting diplomatist, and possessed the rare quality of knowing what he wanted, had long chafed at the irresolute action of the British Government, and was all in favour of making a resolute stand against Russian aggression. Throughout the war, he had continually complained of the apathy and indecision of the British Cabinet, and attributed these deficiencies to divided counsels and to the advanced age of Lord Beaconsfield.[175] Now, with Lord Salisbury installed at the Foreign Office, he plucked up hope again.

> "Salisbury," he wrote to Lord Lyons, "seems to know what he wants—which is a great contrast to his predecessor. If he is firm, we shall, I think, triumph in the end, and remove a great danger

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> from Europe and ourselves. Were it not for that double-dealing, untrustworthy fellow Andrassy, we might perhaps accomplish all that we require without war. Andrassy's proceedings give rise to a strong suspicion that the secret understanding between the three Emperors still exists. The Sultan is persuaded of it, and I have found that his instinct in such matters is usually right."

On May 11, Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Lyons saying that Count Münster[176] (German Ambassador in London) had assured him that the object upon which the French were bent in the Mediterranean was Tunis. "Do you hear anything of the sort?" he asked Lord Lyons, and added the highly important statement: "It is of course an extension of French territory and

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[175] Formerly Benjamin Disraeli. (*See footnote on page 61*)

[176] Georg Herbert Fürst zu Münster von Derneburg (1820 – 1902) also known by his earlier title of Count of Münster-Ledenburg, was a Hanoverian and later German diplomat and politician. He served as ambassador to London from 1873 – 1885 and to Paris from 1885 – 1900.

influence of which we should not have the slightest jealousy or fear. But I am not assuming in any way that the Porte would wish to give it up. I should only like to have your opinion how far France would wish to have it."
To this Lord Lyons replied:—

> "Ever since I can remember, the Italians have suspected the French, and the French have suspected the Italians of designs upon Tunis. Bismarck's mention of it at this moment is probably only one of his usual devices to sow distrust of France. I have never found that the acquisition of Tunis recommended itself to French imagination, and I don't believe it would be taken as anything like a set-off against English acquisitions in Egypt or Syria. I believe our principal interest in Tunis arises from its being a source of supply of provisions to Malta. When Décazes wished to set us against the supposed Italian designs upon it, he used to talk of its being dangerous to us to have Malta in a vice between Sicily and an Italian Tunis, but it never seemed to me that the peril was very clear.
>
> **********
>
> England is very popular here at this moment, and the Prince of Wales's visit has been a principal

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> cause of this, but the French have no intention to fight with us or for us. They back us up in asserting the sanctity of Treaties, and they certainly desire that the *status quo* may be maintained in the Mediterranean, until France is a little stronger.

It will be remembered that only a few years earlier the German Government had informed the French Government through Count Arnim that it would not tolerate the establishment of anything in the nature of a French Protectorate in Tunis; so that if the French were now really entertaining any designs of that nature, it was pretty obvious that it could only be the result of a hint from Berlin. The question of Tunis, however, was shortly overshadowed by greater issues. On May 16, Lord Salisbury transmitted to Paris a long document which formed the basis of the so-called Anglo-Turkish Convention. The proposals embodied subsequently in the convention were contained in a private letter to Mr. Layard, dated May 10, and the latter was directed not to proceed with the negotiations until further instructions were received, as the necessity for the convention depended upon the nature of the reply which Count Schouvaloff was to bring back from St. Petersburg. Whatever may have been said at the time in denunciation of the occupation of Cyprus and the Asia Minor Protectorate, it can hardly be denied that Lord Salisbury had a good case logically, as is shown by the following letter.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
May 22, 1878.

> Until I see Schouvaloff to-morrow I shall know little of the probabilities of our acting

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> on that private letter to Layard of last week, of which I sent you a copy. If, however, we do so, it seems to me that we have a very good logical case—Is logic any use in diplomacy?—against any objections the French may raise.

> By the Tripartite Treaty of April 25, 1856, we had a right to call on them to help us in restraining Russia from appropriating Turkish territory. They have loudly and constantly asserted that no military action is to be expected on their part. In Europe we can meet the consequences of that desertion by the help of Austria, Greece, the Rhodope mountaineers and others. But in Asia we are abandoned wholly to ourselves. The French have left us to face and guard against the consequences of that Russian encroachment which they undertook to join with us in resisting. Does it lie in their mouth, if we say that such encroachments, if persisted in, require special precautions? that we cannot turn the Russians out by ourselves, and that abandoned by our ally, who should have made the task easy to us, we have no choice except to mount guard over the endangered territory and take up the positions requisite for doing so with effect? I do not see what answer the French would have.
>
> But you will probably reply that my reasoning is idle trouble, because logic is of no use in diplomacy.

The French would have had no real cause for complaint if they had discovered the contents of the proposed Anglo-Turkish Convention, for as Lord Salisbury had already pointed out, he had been careful "to turn the eyes of desire away from Syria," the only portion of Asia Minor in which France was interested; but Waddington had been making declarations against any of the Powers helping themselves to Turkish territory, and although these declarations were meant only to apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, he would probably have used much the same language if he had learnt that England was thinking of occupying any

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portion of the Turkish Empire. Logic may not be of much use in diplomacy, but it is of still less use in influencing public opinion, and an appeal to the Tripartite Treaty, after it had been set aside so long, would have come rather late in the day. As, however, the necessity for providing for British interests and British safety in Asia was indisputable, Lord Salisbury was justified in contending that those Powers who disliked the only methods which were within our reach, should give us such help as would enable us to dispense with them.

Upon the return of Schouvaloff from St. Petersburg, it turned out, as Lord Salisbury had anticipated, that Russia was prepared to make concessions in Europe, but scarcely any in Asia. Layard was, therefore, directed to negotiate the Anglo-Turkish Convention.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, May 29, 1878.

> I send you two memoranda, or rather two separate versions of the same paper, which will explain fully the nature of the propositions which Schouvaloff brought back to me, and the extent to which we have been able to accept his proposals. The upshot of the matter has been that the Czar yields substantially all we want in Bulgaria and as to the Greek provinces, but sticks to his text as to Montenegro, Bessarabia, and the Armenian conquests, except Bayazid.
>
> I have informed Schouvaloff that against these Asiatic acquisitions it will be necessary for us to take precautions; and while taking from him a formal engagement that Russia will not extend her position in Turkey in Asia, we shall ourselves give to

> Turkey a guarantee to the same effect. We shall accept these terms as soon as he receives from St. Petersburg authority to take them in

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> the redaction on which we have ultimately agreed. At the same time we have taken our measures to secure ourselves against the consequences of the Asiatic advance. Layard received on Saturday telegraphic directions in the sense of the private letter which I addressed to him a fortnight ago, and of which I sent you a copy, and with great vigour and skill he procured the signature of an agreement on Sunday last. We do not intend that this fact shall be made public until the Congress, as the agreement is made wholly conditional on the retention of Batoum and Kars. But whether we shall succeed in these good intentions remains to be seen. Our past performances in that line do not justify any very sanguine hope.

As there seems no chance of the Porte ceding Bosnia, and as it is necessary to keep Austria with us in the Congress, we have offered to support her in any proposal she makes in Congress on the subject of Bosnia, if she will support us in questions concerning the limits of occupation and organization of Bulgaria. It is not necessary to tell Waddington this, but, as we have advanced a step since he last asked us the question, it is important to avoid language inconsistent with it.

One cannot help suspecting Lord Salisbury's sense of humour as being responsible for the stipulation, that, if the Russians abandoned to the Turks their conquests from them in Asia Minor, the occupation of Cyprus should come to an end and the Anglo-Turkish Convention become null and void. On the following day (May 30), the so-called Anglo-Russian agreement was signed, and the enterprising Mr. Marvin,[177] who had been temporarily employed at the Foreign Office on the cheap, handed it over to the *Globe* newspaper, thus creating a political sensation of the first order.

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The agreement with Russia being now completed, and an invitation to the Congress in suitable terms having been accepted, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury decided to go to Berlin themselves, instead of sending Lord Lyons.

[177] Charles Thomas Marvin (1854–1890), was a British author and Foreign Office employee, whose public disclosure of government secrets prompted the creation of the Official Secrets Act. Marvin was born at Plumstead, Kent, in 1854. At the age of sixteen he went to Russia to join his father, who was assistant-manager of an engineering works on the Neva. He remained in Russia for six years until 1876 and acquired a good knowledge of the Russian language. For eighteen months he was the correspondent of *The Globe and Traveller* at Saint Petersburg. On 16 July 1877 he entered the Foreign Office as a copying clerk. On 29 May 1878 he was employed to make a copy of a secret treaty with Russia, the "Anglo Russian Convention of 30th May 1878". The same evening he supplied *The Globe and Traveller* with a summary of the treaty from memory. On 1 June, Lord Salisbury, the then Foreign Secretary, faced with the alternative of admitting the secret deal, said in the House of Lords that this summary was "wholly unworthy of their lordships' confidence". On 14 June *The Globe* printed a complete text of the treaty which Marvin had again provided from memory. On 26 June Marvin was arrested, but was released on 16 July after it was found that he had committed no offence known to English law.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
June 5, 1878.

I feel that I owe you many apologies for my rudeness in not writing to you on Saturday night to announce to you the decision of the Cabinet—and to thank you for the very kind and cordial way you had placed yourself at our disposition in the spring to perform what was a very ugly duty. The Cabinet was rushed to the decision which it took, partly by the consideration to which you advert, that the threads of the last two months' negotiations were more completely in our hands than by any process of communication they could be in yours—but also by the fact that we have dangerous questions looming at Paris—and we cannot afford to have you absent from your post.

My excuse for my negligence is the prosaic one that I had not a moment of time. The agonies of a man who has to finish a difficult negotiation, and at the same time to entertain four royalties in a country house can be better imagined than described.

The Convention at Constantinople has been signed with expression of lively gratitude on the Sultan's part. I am sorry that your impressions of the mood in which the French are likely to receive the news when published, are still so gloomy. However, we must hope for the best. We have assembled a powerful fleet at Portsmouth and we shall have six or seven first-rate ironclads to do what may be necessary in the Mediterranean, besides smaller ships. And our relations with Bismarck are particularly good. So I hope our friends at Paris will confine themselves to epigram.

If we can, we shall keep the matter secret till we get at Congress to the part of the Treaty of San Stefano (Art. XIX) which concerns the Asiatic annexations. I do not know whether d'Harcourt has any inkling, but ever since his return from Paris his manner has changed.

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Lord Lyons hailed the decision of Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury as a "deliverance from a nightmare which had weighed upon him since March," and found a sympathizer in Lord Odo Russell, who had never expected much good from the Congress if the Three Emperors' League was revived, and who doubted whether the British public would be contented with an amended San Stefano Treaty. The probable action of Waddington, who was to be the French representative at Berlin, is foreshadowed in the following letter.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, June 4, 1878.

I am very glad that you and Lord Beaconsfield have determined to go yourselves to the Congress. The matters to be treated are too grave to be left to subordinates, and they could hardly be treated properly by any one who had not had a minute acquaintance day by day with the recent communications with Russia and Austria.

Waddington will, I think, be a satisfactory colleague in some respects, but in others I am afraid you will have difficulties with him. His English blood and his English education tell both ways. On the one hand, he is more straightforward than most Frenchmen; he understands and shares many English feelings, and he sees the force of English arguments, or perhaps I should rather say, of arguments put forward in an

English way. But, on the other hand, he feels strongly the necessity of guarding against the tendency in France to suspect him of an English bias. He will be disposed to join in resistance to exaggerated Russian pretensions with regard to Roumelia[178] and the Danube. His personal sentiments are strongly in favour of Greece. He has a certain sympathy with Christian as against Mussulman, but he does not carry this to an immoderate or

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unpractical extent. There is, however, one point on which you may find him very stiff. He is most strongly opposed to any change in the relative position of the Great Powers in the Mediterranean, and he would, I am afraid, be quite as unwilling to see England extend her influence in that sea, as he would be to see Russia do so. It is in order to prevent any alteration in the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, more than from any other reason, that he has made the participation of France in the Congress conditional on the exclusion of all questions not directly arising out of the war between Russia and Turkey, and has positively mentioned Syria and Egypt as countries to be excluded from the discussion. He would not perhaps be disinclined to let these questions come up, if he thought he should obtain the support of other Powers in resisting any change made outside of the Congress.

At any rate, public feeling in France would probably be too strong to allow him to acquiesce in any redistribution of territory or influence in favour of England. But I expressed my opinion on this point so fully to you and Lord Beaconsfield in the interview I had with you just before I left England, that I have nothing more to say about it. The horrible event[179] which took place at Berlin the day before yesterday has, however, thrown so strong a light upon one phase of French opinion, that I feel bound to direct your attention to it. It seems very shocking that while the Emperor William is suffering from the wounds so wickedly inflicted, people here should be speculating upon the consequences of their being fatal, but so it is. The French believe that the maintenance of the present military system in Germany depends upon the Emperor William, and that even if His Majesty's successor had the same determination as His Majesty himself to keep it up, public opinion in the country would make it impossible for him to do so. What foundation there may be for this supposition, I do not pretend to determine; but that it influences the French is certain. Anything which makes them believe the life of the Emperor to be precarious, diminishes the restraint which the fear of Germany imposes upon them, and

[178] Rumelia was a historical region in Southeastern Europe that was administered by the Ottoman Empire, roughly corresponding to the Balkans. It encompassed an area south of the Danube between the Black Sea and the Aegean.

[179] Nobiling's attempt to assassinate the German Emperor. (LN) Karl Eduard Nobiling (1848 – 1878) was a German attempted assassin, who in 1878 made an attempt on the life of Emperor Wilhelm I. On the afternoon of 2 June 1878, he shot and wounded Kaiser Wilhelm I from the window of his apartment on the *Unter den Linden* boulevard. He used a double-barrelled shotgun and numerous pellets hit the body of the emperor, though the life of the 81-year-old was saved by his Pickelhaube helmet. When immediately after the failed assassination attempt several witnesses tried to disarm him, Nobiling shot himself in the head with a revolver. Not fit to be questioned, he soon fell senseless and finally succumbed to his injuries in September 1878.

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renders them more stiff in asserting their own views and pretensions, and less averse from contemplating the possibility of supporting them by more than words.

There are, in my opinion, strong arguments to be brought in favour of our taking measures to be in a position to resist Russia by our own means, if other Powers will give us no help in doing so; but as you said in a former letter, logic is perhaps not of much use in diplomacy, and seems to me to be of still less use in influencing public opinion. I doubt our logic doing much to reconcile the French to our exercising a separate protection over Turkey in Asia, or occupying a Turkish island in the Mediterranean. I am afraid you will think I have become more nervous than ever, and more prone to the common error among diplomatists of exaggerating the importance of the country in which they are themselves stationed, but anyhow I have not seen any reason to change my views as to the feelings prevalent in France.

The Parliamentary session at Versailles is about to close. Thanks to the Exhibition, it has been a very tranquil one, but we must be on the look-out for squalls when the Chamber meets again in the autumn. Gambetta has hitherto restrained his followers from opposing the Ministry, and from proposing radical measures, but it is doubtful whether he will be able, even if willing, to restrain them after the end of the Exhibition. Some unexpected incident might even produce a crisis before. At any rate the elections of a portion of the Senate, which will take place early next year, may remove the check which the Conservative majority in that House has hitherto put upon the Chamber of Deputies. The Marshal does not talk of making any more attempts at resisting the will of the majority, but I understand that he does not talk very seriously of retiring as soon as the election is over.

It may perhaps be worth while to mention that Waddington finds the influence of Gambetta over the Government very irksome, and is not fond of having it alluded to.

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The Congress met at Berlin in the middle of June, and the awkward question of whether Waddington should be informed of the Anglo-Turkish Convention or not was debated. Lord Lyons knew perfectly well that the French would be furious when they heard of it, and that the greater the surprise, the greater would be their indignation. The lines laid down for Waddington's guidance at the Congress were that France desired:

1. Peace.
2. Neutrality.
3. The necessity of the consent of all the Powers to any modifications of the Treaties.
4. The exclusion of Egypt, Syria, the Holy Places, and other topics foreign to the Russo-Turkish War.

These points were certainly not favourable to England receiving any support from France in defending her menaced interests in Asia Minor, as the absolute neutrality of France was the point most insisted upon. In fact France was so obviously anxious to stand aloof, that one suggestion was made that she should be asked to co-operate with us in Asia Minor on the assumption that such co-operation was sure to be refused. This, however, was considered to be too hazardous a course, and it was eventually decided to say nothing to Waddington for the time being, lest he should make the Anglo-Turkish Convention an excuse for not

attending the Congress at all. The secret, unlike the Anglo-Russian agreement, seems to have been well kept, and cannot have been known to the Russians, or they would have utilized it for the purpose of sowing discord between the British and French representatives. Finally, on July 6, Lord Salisbury told the whole story to Waddington in a private letter.

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In this letter Lord Salisbury pointed out that, as far as the Russian annexations in Asia Minor were concerned, we were in a completely isolated condition, since Austria was only willing to take part in restoring the Porte to a certain independence in Europe, while France had clearly intimated that she had no intention of engaging in war for the purpose of maintaining the stipulations of the Treaty of 1856. The result was that England was compelled to act alone, as her interests were too great to allow the *status quo* in Asia Minor to be completely destroyed, and consequently the onerous obligation of a defensive alliance with Turkey had been undertaken in order to provide against future Russian annexations beyond the frontier assigned under the present negotiations at Berlin. As this engagement could not be carried out from such a distance as Malta, the Sultan had made over Cyprus to England during such period as the defensive alliance might last. The conditional nature of the Convention, and the restraint shown by Her Majesty's Government in rejecting more tempting and advantageous offers are dealt with in the following passages.

> We have entered into an agreement which is now embodied in a formal Convention at Constantinople, that whenever the Russians shall, for whatever reason, return to their Asiatic frontier as it existed before the last war, we will immediately evacuate the island; and that intermediately we will annually pay the Sultan whatever is ascertained to be the surplus of revenue over expenditure.
>
> I am telling Your Excellency no secret when I say that we have been very earnestly pressed, by advisers of no mean authority, to occupy Egypt—or at least to take the borders of the Suez Canal. Such an operation might have been very suitable for our interests and would have presented no material difficulties.

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> No policy of this kind however was entertained by Her Majesty's Government. We had received an intimation from the French Government that any such proceeding would be very unwelcome to the French people, and we could not but feel the reasonableness of their objection under existing circumstances.
>
> We have therefore turned a deaf ear to all suggestions of that kind.
>
> We have been likewise recommended to occupy some port on the coast of Syria, such as Alexandretta, but we felt that, however carefully guarded, such a proceeding might, in the present condition of opinion with respect to the Ottoman Empire, be construed as indicating an intention to acquire territory on the mainland of Western Asia; and we did not desire to be suspected of designs which will be wholly absent from our thoughts. We have therefore preferred to accept from the Sultan the provisional occupation of a position less advantageous indeed, but still sufficient for the purpose, and not exposed to the inconveniences I have mentioned. How long we shall stay there I cannot tell. But I think there is just ground of hope that the Russians will find in a short time that the territory they have acquired is costly and unproductive; that the

> chances of making it a stepping-stone to further conquests is cut off, and that they will abandon it as a useless acquisition. In that case our *raison d'être* at Cyprus will be gone and we shall retire.
>
> I have adopted this form of conveying the matter to you, as the Convention being entirely within the Treaty competence of the two Powers, requires no official communication. But it would have been inconsistent with the feelings of friendship existing between our two countries, and with my gratitude for your courteous procedure towards me personally, to have allowed you to hear it first from any other source.

There can be little doubt as to the identity of the "advisers of no mean authority," for Bismarck had been

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urging upon England for some time the occupation of Egypt, obviously with the main intention of creating discord with France, and Her Majesty's Government deserved all the credit claimed by Lord Salisbury for resisting these overtures. It is, however, somewhat difficult to follow Lord Salisbury's reasonings for preferring Cyprus to Alexandretta. It was plain that the occupation of either of these places would cause irritation, and as subsequent events have shown, Cyprus has never been of much use to us, and besides being crushed under the burden of the tribute annually paid to the Turkish Government, is inhabited chiefly by Greeks who do not appear to thoroughly appreciate British rule. Alexandretta, on the other hand, might, under our control, have developed into a highly important seaport and become the starting-place for the Bagdad railway; whereas, as a matter of fact, it has now practically passed into the hands of the Germans.

M. Waddington did not remain long in sole possession of his exclusive information, for on July 8, the Anglo-Turkish Convention was made known to the world, and the general impression produced was that Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury had effected a brilliant coup. In France, however, the news caused quite unjustifiable indignation, and the prudent Lord Lyons telegraphed to Lord Salisbury on July 10, advising him to get the final acts of the Congress signed as quickly as possible, lest Waddington should be directed to come away without putting his name to anything.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 12, 1878.

> Your telegram of last night was a great relief to me, but I shall not feel quite happy till I hear

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> that all is actually signed. I am happy to find that Gambetta and the Ministerial Parties, who are violent on the subject of the Convention, are not having things all their own way in the press. No newspaper can be said to defend England altogether, but the more sensible papers are against any active opposition on the part of France. Gambetta and Waddington are not friends, and Gambetta will no doubt attack Waddington and try to upset him. This may lead to serious difficulties in France.

> It is no use to shut one's eyes to the fact that at this moment, there is a great and general irritation in France against England. It is too soon to foresee what turn public opinion will take eventually, but at the present moment, we must not forget to take this irritation into account in our dealings with this country.

The general feeling was so unsatisfactory, that he felt compelled to write to Mr. Knollys[180] urging that the Prince of Wales, who was acting as President of the British Section of the International Exhibition, should postpone a contemplated visit to Paris, and enclosing articles in the press of an abominable character directed against His Royal Highness. Irritation over the Anglo-Turkish Convention was not confined to one party, but existed in every class from the *haute société* downwards. The Conservatives and their press utilized it as a means of attacking the Republic, complained of the effacement of France, and asserted that she had been duped by her former ally, while the Republican opposition, headed by Gambetta, charged Waddington with having made a shameful surrender to England.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 16, 1878.

> The first explosion of French wrath, on the appearance of the Convention of the 4th of

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> June, was even more violent than I anticipated. It was well that you had the Minister for Foreign Affairs under your influence, and at a distance from that of the excited spirits here. Now the first force of the eruption is spent and the lava cooled down. I am afraid only on the surface, but any way, it must be the surface which cools first. At all events the strong language is in great measure abandoned. In the first place, as no one now recommends any immediate action on the part of France, the French are beginning to see that they cut a sorry figure by barking without biting. In the second place, they conceive that the alliance of the Three Empires is as close as ever, and they think that if they quarrel with England, they will be giving a triumph to Bismarck and find themselves face to face with him without any friend on their side. Lastly, I would fain hope that some of them are beginning to take a really reasonable view of things, and to see that we had absolutely nothing left for it, but to act for ourselves, as they would not or could not help us.
>
> Still we shall have some trouble with them, and shall probably find them for some time suspicious, jealous, and hard to deal with.
>
> Egypt may be our first difficulty. With or without a hint from home, French agents there will be seeking to trip us up. It seems to me that our task there will be a delicate one. On the one hand, it will no doubt be desirable to soothe French vanity as far as possible; but, on the other hand, anything like a defeat or a retreat in Egypt, might very much impair the prestige which the position which we have taken with regard to Asia has given us. I wish Rivers Wilson[181] had already been installed as Minister of Finance when the Convention of the 4th June was made public.

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[180] Now Viscount Knollys (LN). Francis Knollys, 1st Baron Knollys (1837 – 1924) Private Secretary to the Sovereign from 1901 to 1913. He had been created Baron Knollys, of Caversham in the County of Oxford, on 21 July 1902 and became a Viscount in 1911.

[181] Sir Charles Rivers Wilson (1831–1916) was a British civil servant and financier. He entered the Treasury in 1856, and was private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Robert Lowe) from

Another ticklish question is that of the Newfoundland Fisheries. I am very anxious to know what, if anything, passed between you and Waddington on the subject at Berlin. The present moment does not seem a very happy one for resuming negotiations, and at all events it might be well to keep the matter, if possible, in the calm atmosphere of London, and at a distance from the heat of the political weather here.

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I have been indirectly in communication with Gambetta, and have reason to hope he is being brought, or is coming of himself, round about the Convention. What I am immediately afraid of is his nevertheless trying to upset Waddington. I should regret Waddington's fall on all grounds, and it would be extremely awkward to have a successor in the office brought in on the pretext that Waddington had not been stiff enough with regard to England. The candidates for his place are said to be Freycinet, the present Minister of Public Works, who was Gambetta's Sub-Minister for War in 1870 and 1871; M. Duclerc,[182] one of the Vice-Presidents of the Senate, who passes for a moderate man, but who has no knowledge of foreign affairs, and Gambetta himself. I suppose, however, Gambetta would be an impossibility with the Marshal, and that he himself would feel that he was compromising his prospect of greater things hereafter, by taking a subordinate office now.

M. Waddington, upon his return from Berlin, realizing doubtless that his position had been shaken, though from no fault of his own, intimated his intention of writing a despatch in which Her Majesty's Government would be called upon to give to the French certain assurances with regard to Egypt and Tunis. As it was desirable that this request should not be made in too peremptory a manner, he was exhorted to make his communication in such a way as would make it easy for Her Majesty's Government to return a cordial answer. The difficulty about giving the assurances was pointed out by Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Foreign Office, July 20, 1878.

What M. Waddington said to you is very much what he said to me at Berlin, though the lurid touches about war have been filled in afterwards.

1868 to 1873. He was Royal Commissioner for the Paris Exhibition of 1878, having been already appointed Comptroller General of Office for Reduction of National Debt in 1874. Whilst holding this position, Wilson visited Egypt in 1876 and he was appointed a government director of the Suez Canal Company. Early in 1878 he was selected as vice-president of the Commission to enquire into the Egyptian financial situation. A few months later, in May, Wilson was nominated Financial Minister in Egypt. In 1879, Wilson and the first Prime Minister of Egypt, Nubar Pasha, were the victims of a serious outrage by the mob in the streets of Cairo – an incident which was the direct precursor of the Urabi revolt and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. In April 1880, on the fall of the Khedive Ismail and the inauguration of his son Tewfik as Khedive, Wilson was appointed president of the Commission for the Liquidation of the Egyptian Debt, with full powers to regulate the financial position of Egypt. On the conclusion of this duty he returned to his post in London.

[182] Charles Théodore Eugène Duclerc (1812 – 1888) was a French journalist and politician of the Third Republic. He was a member of the editorial board of the *National* newspaper. Duclerc served as Minister of Finance from 7 March to 9 May 1848 in the provisional government of France headed by Jacques-Charles Dupont de l'Eure. He later served for six months as prime minister, from 1882 to 1883 under the third Republic.

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The precise answer to be given to his promised despatch must of course depend very much on the terms in which it is framed. But he may be certain that we shall answer it not only with the desire of cultivating to the utmost possible extent our good relations with France, but also with the aim of making his own personal task more easy, as far as it is in our power to contribute to that result.

The matter to which he has called your attention, as he did ours at Berlin, was difficult to make the subject of binding assurances, because the contingencies under which those assurances would receive a practical application are difficult to foresee.

If France occupied Tunis to-morrow, we should not even remonstrate. But to promise that publicly would be a little difficult, because we must avoid giving away other people's property without their consent, and also because it is no business of ours to pronounce beforehand on the considerations which Italy would probably advance upon that subject. In the same way, with respect to Egypt, we have stated distinctly more than once that we do not entertain any intention of occupying it; and that statement we are perfectly willing to renew. But, having done that, and having expressed our anxiety to work with France in Egypt, we have said as much as would be seemly or possible. We can hardly pledge the Khedive as to what he means to do, without in reality assuming a voice in his concerns which we do not, according to any international right, possess.

These considerations make me rather anxious that M. Waddington in his proposed despatch should avoid putting categorical questions which we might not be able to answer precisely as he wishes, and yet which we could not avoid answering without seeming to exhibit precisely that coolness which he very properly and justly deprecates, and any appearance of which we are as anxious as he is to avoid. I think that his despatch—if I might suggest it—would more properly take the form of a statement, in general terms, of the territorial points on the African

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coast in which France takes an interest, leaving us to make such assurances as we think we can properly give, and which we will certainly make as cordial as we can.

To French influence in Egypt we do not offer any objection; and we have never taken any step calculated to oust it. But any detailed engagements as to questions of administration could not be taken without imprudence; for each step must be taken as the necessity for it arises. The two great points are to keep the Khedive on the throne, and to get the financial obligations satisfied. For these objects, the two countries will, I hope, co-operate heartily.

I am a little anxious as to the form he gives his despatch, for if he makes it too peremptory, he may produce that very appearance of estrangement which it is our common object to avoid.

I will write to you more fully about the Newfoundland Fisheries when I have had time to study the papers. My conversations with him have put me fully in possession of the French case. I am not so certain that I know all the points of the English case.

An opportunity fortunately occurred of conciliating one personage who might have given a great deal of trouble, and afforded an instance of the influence which can occasionally be brought to bear upon advanced democrats when judiciously applied.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 21, 1878.

> The Prince of Wales leaves Paris for London to-night. As his arrival at Paris to attend the English concerts at the Exhibition had been publicly announced, I did not think that it would be advisable that it should be postponed, but I have been a little nervous about it. So far however there has been no contretemps, and the visit has been politically useful.
>
> The Prince invited Gambetta to breakfast with him yesterday. It was His Royal Highness's own

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> idea, but I thought it judicious. I have not the least doubt that if the Prince of Wales had not been civil to Gambetta, the Russian Embassy would have asked any Grand Duke who came here to show him particular attention, in order to bring him over to Russia. The success of such a manœuvre has I think been effectually guarded against.
>
> Gambetta appears to have spoken to the Prince strongly in favour of an alliance between France and England—to have declared himself more or less reconciled to the Convention of June 4th —and to have spoken in the most disparaging terms, not so much of the Foreign Policy of Russia, as of the institutions, the Government, and the administration of that country. I hear from other quarters that Gambetta was extremely pleased with the interview. I am assured also that the Prince of Wales acquitted himself with great skill. The Prince thought, and so did I, that it was better that I should not be at the breakfast. The Embassy was represented by Sheffield. The occasion of the invitation to Gambetta was his having been very obliging and useful in matters connected with the Exhibition.
>
> To-day Waddington met the Prince of Wales at luncheon at the Embassy.
>
> So far, then, things look well, but I am assured the calm does not extend far below the surface. Gambetta has the southern temperament, and his language is a good deal influenced by the impression of the moment. He has postponed, but he has not really given up, his attack on Waddington. He will still, if he continues in his present mood, try to turn him out in October, when the Chambers reassemble.
>
> The thing which would have most effect in reconciling the French to our acquisition and protectorate, would be to make them practically advantageous to the holders of Turkish and Egyptian Bonds.

When M. Waddington eventually presented his despatch, or rather despatches, for there were

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two, they were apparently found unobjectionable in tone; but on the ground that the one referring to Tunis was not "couched in more diplomatic language," it was suggested to him

that he should rewrite it in language more suitable for publication subsequently; this he declined to do, but promised not to publish it at all. The chief object presumably of these communications was: in the first place to obtain assurances from England with regard to Egypt, and in the second place to make Lord Salisbury's statement about Tunis appear as an invitation to the French to appropriate that country. M. Waddington, quite naturally, did not wish it to be thought that he had come back empty handed from Berlin at a time when the Great Christian Powers were helping themselves liberally at the Turk's expense.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
July 24, 1878.

> Waddington's two despatches were left with me yesterday. They are very friendly in tone and will not, I think, be difficult to answer. The answers however must be delayed some days, as the Cabinet does not meet till Saturday.
>
> Intermediately, I demur a little to the quotations that he makes from my conversation. The general tenor is quite accurate, but his vivacious French by no means renders the tone of my communication, and what is of more importance, to the rights and claims of other Powers, Turkey and Italy especially. What I told him was that if a state of things should arise in which there was no other obstacle to his occupying Tunis but our objection, that objection would not be made. I made the observation for the purpose of showing him that we had no Mediterranean aspirations—and did not desire to disturb the balance of power in that sea. Our eyes were bent wholly on the East. But he makes me talk of Tunis and Carthage as if they had been my own personal property and I was making him a liberal wedding present.

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> I do not know whether he will be inclined to put his quotations from my conversations into a more general form. I think it will save the possibility of misunderstanding later; and will also dispense with the necessity of a correction on my part, as he has reported the general drift and terms of my observations with perfect fidelity.

The reception of the Anglo-Turkish Convention in France may be said to have been the first of a series of difficulties which unfortunately impaired the relations between France and England during many years, but which have now happily almost entirely disappeared. The irritation aroused in France was completely unjustified, and almost incapable of explanation, unless the secrecy which surrounded the negotiation of the Convention may be considered an adequate cause. No French interests were prejudicially affected; and the maintenance of secrecy really relieved France from a considerable difficulty, for a premature disclosure might have prevented the participation of France in the Congress; but oddly enough, the Anglo-Turkish Convention appeared to be the only matter relating to the Congress in which the French took any interest, and so much indignation did some patriots show that it was even seriously suggested that by way of inflicting a surprise upon England, France should seize Chios, or Rhodes, or Crete. In fact, at one time, Crete appeared to possess considerably greater attractions than Tunis, in spite of the latter's proximity to Algeria.

Probably the real explanation of this display of temper was that the French felt their strength to be returning, and were in no mood to put up with what they erroneously considered to be a slight, whether intentional or unintentional.

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One frantic jeremiad from Constantinople over the Treaty of Berlin may be quoted before the subject is dismissed. Layard, who had been already greatly scandalized by the publication of the Anglo-Russian agreement, wrote:—

> What do you think of the Treaty of Berlin? It appears to me that if ever an apple of discord was thrown amongst nations, this is the one. I see in it the elements of future wars and disorders without number, and an upsetting of all the principles of justice and right which have hitherto governed the relations and intercourse of states. Force and fraud have triumphed, and when Turkey has been completely destroyed and cut up under the new system, it will probably be applied with similar successful results to other countries. Russia has gained, with the assistance of Germany, all and more than she wanted, and the interests of England and of other Powers were sacrificed in order to enable Bismarck to recruit his beery stomach by drinking some mineral waters. It is all very well to sit round a green table and to cut up an Empire on a map. It is a very different thing to put what has been so easily settled into execution. I anticipate no end of trouble and bloodshed for years to come in this unhappy country. We have not yet recovered here from the effect of the publication of the unfortunate memorandum which so completely destroyed the great and commanding position that we had acquired.

There is not much here about Peace with Honour.

CHAPTER XIII

M. GRÉVY'S PRESIDENCY (1878-1879)

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The event in 1878 which aroused more interest in France than the Berlin Congress or anything else, was the holding of the great Exhibition in Paris, which not only demonstrated to the world the recovery of France from the disasters of 1870-71, but had the beneficial effect of improving Anglo-French relations. It was universally acknowledged that nothing had contributed more to the success of the Exhibition than the hearty co-operation given from first to last by England, and in this connection the services rendered by the Prince of Wales were of conspicuous value. His Royal Highness had come to Paris early in the year to press forward the preparations of the British section; he was present at each important phase of the Exhibition; he attended unremittingly at the office of the British Royal Commission, and was assiduous in transacting business there with the French Exhibition authorities as well as with the British and Colonial Commissioners and exhibitors. These visible proofs of the Prince's interest in their great undertaking were by no means lost upon the French, and the judgment and tact which he displayed, whenever opportunities

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arose for impressing upon the French people the cordial feeling entertained by himself and by his country towards France, produced an excellent political effect.

The Exhibition naturally threw upon the Embassy an immense amount of extra labour, consisting largely of social work, and one of the most brilliant social functions of the year was a ball at the British Embassy attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales, at which the various hostile sections of the French political world met, on that occasion only, in temporary harmony.

The general success of the Exhibition and the prominence of English participation inspired Queen Victoria with the desire to pay a very private visit to Paris, accompanied by Princess Beatrice and a small suite, towards the beginning of August. So anxious was she to maintain secrecy that the only person in England to whom her intention was confided, was Lord Beaconsfield, and Lord Lyons was enjoined not to say a word about it to any one, but to inform her confidentially whether she could visit the Exhibition without being mobbed; whether the heat was likely to be intense; and whether there was any danger to be apprehended from Socialists—the term Socialist doubtless including, in the Royal vocabulary, Anarchists, Terrorists, and Revolutionaries in general. Incidentally, too, she expressed a wish to hear the Ambassador's opinion of the Treaty of Berlin.

Lord Lyons answered the first queries satisfactorily, but it was characteristic of him that, even to his sovereign, he declined to commit himself to an opinion on the policy of his official chief. "Lord Lyons was

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always of opinion that Your Majesty's Representative at the Congress should be a Cabinet Minister, and he rejoiced very much when he heard that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury had been appointed. He has no detailed or authentic information of the proceedings of the Congress, but so far as he can judge at present, he has every hope that the results will be satisfactory to Your Majesty."

A long series of letters followed, and after much hesitation, the Queen finally abandoned her intention, the prospect of hot weather apparently proving to be too great a deterrent. One singular incident in the correspondence, which was conducted with much secrecy, was that a letter from Lord Lyons went all the way to New York before reaching its destination at Balmoral—an error for which some one presumably suffered.

During the autumn and winter of 1878, constant discussions took place between the English and French Governments on the subject of questions connected with Egypt and Tunis, and it was again thought at one time that a French coup was in contemplation as a reply to the Anglo-Turkish Convention. The New Year was signalized by the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty. In announcing this intelligence, Lord Lyons said that his only surprise was that the existing Treaty had lasted so long, and that he did not consider it advisable to make any attempt to conceal annoyance about it. The treaty of 1860 had been made from political motives, and our best chance of being decently treated commercially lay in the dislike of the French to placing themselves on bad terms with us. 'This is the policy Gambetta avows. As for any Free Trade feeling in France, that is absolutely a broken reed for us to lean upon.'

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In January, 1879, senatorial elections took place which resulted in large Republican gains, and it seemed probable that the existing Moderate Ministry might not last much longer. It was generally expected that when the Chambers met, there would be a great struggle on the part of the advanced Left for all the lucrative and important posts, and there were the usual fears of mob rule which prevailed whenever a partial or entire change of Ministry was imminent. The prospect of losing Waddington as Foreign Minister drew from Lord Salisbury a characteristic expression of regret: "I suppose M. Waddington is likely to be a transitory phenomenon, if the papers are to be believed. I am sorry for it; for he suits us much better than some converted Legitimist with an historic name, whose policy I suppose will be a compound of Louis XIV. and 1791."

Waddington was not to go yet, however, and Lord Lyons complained that he made his life a burden to him in connection with the proceedings of the British Consul General at Tunis—an aged official who did not view the spirited French policy there with any friendly eye, and whose removal the French Government ardently desired. As a general massacre of aged official innocents was contemplated shortly by the British Foreign Office, a somewhat ignominious compromise was offered in the shape of an early retirement of this particular official under an age limit. The French intentions with regard to Tunis had by this time become quite evident, and the unfortunate Bey found it extremely difficult to prevent excuses being found for active

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intervention in the shape of naval demonstrations and so forth; it being well known that Marshal MacMahon and other military men were extremely eager to annex the country at the first opportunity.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Jan. 14, 1879.

> I should be very sorry to do anything disagreeable to the French with regard to Tunis. It is the place about which they are most susceptible at this moment, and the irritation

they would feel at any interference with them there, would overpower, at all events for the time, all considerations of the general advantages of being well with England.

When I said that I saw no reason for hiding any displeasure we might feel at the denunciation of the Commercial Treaties and at the manner in which it was done, I meant that we should not abstain from direct expressions of dissatisfaction at the thing itself.

My notion is that if we take it too quietly, the Protectionists will be able to make the Chambers believe that they can do what they like about the Tariff, and need not fear any resentment from England. I think that if it can be managed, it will be advisable to put it out of the power of the ministers to say that the denunciation has been well received by the English Government, and has produced no bad impression upon it. In order to effect this, I should be glad that something unmistakable on the point should be said in a written communication. If, as I suppose, Montebello's[183] answer to your note declares that the intention is to denounce the Treaties one and all, then the rejoinder which you must make in order to prendre acte of the denunciation would afford a natural opportunity of expressing annoyance and apprehension. This is what was in my mind when I wrote.

There are many members in the Chamber who would deprecate anything likely to produce coolness between France and England, and it is not desirable to leave the Protectionists the

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means of asserting that there is no danger that a restrictive tariff would do this. But the feeling is a vague one, and it would be weakened by endeavours to define it sharply, or to appeal to it too pointedly.

Gambetta holds that the true policy of France is to cultivate the friendship of England and not to loosen the tie of France upon her by instructions injurious to her commerce. He is in particular very much afraid of the feeling in favour of the Empire which would be revived in the wine-growing districts, if under the Republic the English wine duties became less favourable to French wines.

The game of the Protectionists is to put the duties in the general tariff as high as they dare, without provoking retaliation; and the general tariff once passed, to declare that it is the latest expression of the will of the country, and that the Government has no right to relax it by treaty, unless by way of barter, in return for great concessions made to France.

In the mean time matters may possibly in some measure be modified, as regards commercial policy by changes in the Government, but the modification in this respect would scarcely be very great.

[183] French Ambassador at Constantinople. (LN). Louis-Gustave Lannes, Count and then Marquis de Montebello (1838 – 1907) was a French diplomat in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1886 he was appointed ambassador of France to Constantinople, and then to St. Petersburg in 1891.

The "groups," as they are called, of the Left have been endeavouring to get the ministers to negotiate with them before the Chambers met. They want, now the Chambers have met, to reduce the Ministers to absolute dependence on Parliamentary Committees. The Ministers are acting properly and constitutionally. They decline to be dictated to by groups and committees, and they intend to announce their programme from the Tribune, and to call for a vote of confidence or want of confidence, from both Chambers. Waddington, when I saw him yesterday, was very confident of success. They have found it necessary to sacrifice the Minister of War, who, among other defects was entirely inefficient in the Tribune, but Waddington did not anticipate any other changes in the Cabinet. He said that Gambetta had promised the Government his full and cordial support.

To pass from Paris, or rather from Versailles to Constantinople, I will give you for what it may

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be worth, a story which has been brought to the Embassy by a person who has sometimes shown himself to be well informed with regard to what is passing at the Porte. He affirms that a compact has been made between Khaireddin[184] and Osman Pashas[185] to dethrone Sultan Abdul Hamid and set aside the Othman family altogether as effete and half insane. This being done, a member of a family established at Konia is, according to my informant, to be declared Sultan.

I have often heard of the Konia family as having a sort of pretention to the throne, as descending from Seljuk Sultans or some other dynasty overthrown by Othman or his successors.

Abdul Hamid does not generally leave his Grand Viziers in office long enough for them to be able to mature a 'conspiracy against him.'

In January a prolonged struggle took place between the Ministry and the Left, chiefly over the burning question of Government officials, and the alleged unwillingness to introduce really Republican measures; and before the end of the month Marshal MacMahon and his Prime Minister, M. Dufaure tendered their resignations. It was well known that the Marshal was anxious to take this course, and he followed the advice of his friends in choosing, as his reason for resigning, his inability to concur in a measure which deprived some officers of high rank of their military commands. When, therefore, he was confronted with the alternative of signing the decree removing his old companions in arms, or of resigning himself, he replied that Ministers would have to look out for another President, and M. Grévy, a comparatively moderate Liberal, was elected in his place by a large majority. The "transitory phenomenon," M. Waddington, however,

[184] This probably refers to Hayreddin Pasha (also known as Tunuslu Hayreddin Pasha), a highly influential statesman and reformer who served as the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire from 1878 to 1879. He was the Prime Minister of Tunisia (1873 – 1877). Sultan Abdul Hamid II appointed him Grand Vizier (1878 – 1879): shortly after the disastrous Russo-Turkish War but clashed with him over ideas to produce a constitutional monarchy..

[185] Osman Nuri Pasha (1832 – 1900), also known as Gazi Osman Pasha was an Ottoman Turkish field marshal. Being one of the most respected and decorated Ottoman pashas of all time because he held the Bulgarian town of Plevna for five months against superior Russo-Romanian forces in 1877 during the Russo-Turkish War, though the city eventually fell.

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remained in office and indeed became head of a new Administration, but it was felt that this arrangement was merely temporary. Power had really passed into the hands of Gambetta, and although he contented himself, for the time being, with the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies, there was nothing to prevent him from establishing himself in office, whenever he should think that the opportune moment had arrived; since, unlike the Speakership in England, the Presidency of the Chamber is looked upon in France as the road to the highest Ministerial rank.

In consequence of the election of a new President of the Republic in the person of M. Grévy, the question arose as to whether the Foreign Representatives should receive fresh credentials, and the action of Prince Bismarck in this connection caused fresh discord amongst leading French politicians. When M. Waddington was at Berlin, he had made a very favourable impression upon the Chancellor, and as he himself subsequently informed me, Bismarck had taken great pains to be civil to him, and to manifest that especial confidence which takes the form of abusing other people—notably Prince Gortschakoff. He now took the opportunity to inform M. Waddington that he entertained such remarkable esteem for him, that he had advised the Emperor to dispense with any new letter of credence, a proceeding which infuriated Gambetta and disposed him to upset Waddington at an early date. "Altogether there seems an impression," wrote Lord Lyons, "that the new Ministry will not last long. Gambetta does not like either Grévy or Waddington. Waddington has yet to show that he has the staff of a Prime Minister in him. He has not hitherto been a very

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ready or a very effective speaker. He is even said to have a slight English accent in speaking French. I don't believe any one ever perceived this who did not know beforehand that he had had an English education. But this English education certainly has had the effect of preventing him having exactly French modes of thought and French ways, and thus he is not always completely in tune with the feelings of his hearers in Parliament."

It was a common charge made against the late M. Waddington by his opponents that he spoke French with an English, and English with a French accent. As a matter of fact, he was a perfect specimen of a bilinguist, and would have passed as a native of either nation.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Feb. 11, 1879.

> Fournier's[186] vagaries are becoming very dangerous, but we are in a state of anarchy here. The Ministry is composed in general of men of respectable character and respectable abilities; but there is no one of them who has hitherto obtained any great hold on the Chambers or on the country. Their proper game would be to try and form a Liberal-Conservative party of the *Centre Gauche*, the *Centre Droit*, and the *Gauche Républicaine*,[187] with whose support and that of the country at large, they might keep the Ultra Reds in check. Hitherto they have not shown that there is stuff enough in them for this, but then they have hardly had a chance. They have made a weak

[186] French Ambassador to Constantinople (LN). Hugues Marie Henri Fournier (1821 – 1898) was a French diplomat and politician. He held diplomatic posts in several European capitals with the last being in Paris from 1879.
[187] Centre Left, Centre Right and Republican Left factions.

compromise on the Amnesty Question, but if they get a good majority on that question, they might start afresh and show what is in them. So far they are looked upon by most people as warming pans for Gambetta and his followers: and I have been assured that some of the

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French Representatives abroad do not hesitate to communicate with Gambetta behind Waddington's back.

I must confess that, contrary to my wont, I am rather gloomy about the state of things here. The relaxation of the efficiency of the police is undeniable. This was one of the symptoms of the decay of the Empire. The Gendarmerie is being tampered with. Recent measures seem to increase the opportunities for disturbances, and diminish the means of dealing with them. I do not see where, in the present Government, resistance to disorder is to come from in an emergency. But I will not croak. Waddington and his colleagues may steady themselves in office and restore authority yet, but they have not much time to lose.

Waddington would be the safest Minister we could have in Eastern Affairs, if he made his subordinates abroad obey him. Gambetta might be more friendly in commercial matters and more ready to be an active ally in the East, but he would expect a recompense in the West, and might be a dangerous friend who would require careful "watching."

Poor M. Waddington's prospects were not improved by a trivial but untoward incident in the Chamber. In the course of one of his first speeches as Prime Minister "a great deal of laughter is said to have been produced by his dropping some of the sheets of his written speech over the edge of the Tribune, and having to wait till they were picked up"—an incident which serves to show the more generous spirit of the British politician, since a recent Prime Minister was in the habit of delivering soul-stirring orations by the same method, without evoking any disrespectful criticism on the part of his opponents.

Towards the end of February a crisis in Egypt rendered it necessary for the British and French Governments to have recourse to joint action for the purpose of protecting their interests.

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As the result of a Commission of Inquiry in 1878, the Khedive Ismail, who had long boasted that Egypt was practically a European state, accepted the position of a Constitutional Ruler, with Nubar Pasha[188] as his Prime Minister, Mr. Rivers Wilson as Minister of Finance, and a

[188] Nubar Pasha GCSI (1825 – 1899) was an Egyptian-Armenian politician and the first Prime Minister of Egypt and then minister in Egypt. His role in international finance and colonial administration made him a key figure in French foreign policy.

[188] Ernest-Napoléon Godeaux (1833 – 1906) was a significant figure in French diplomacy during the late 19th century, particularly known for his tenure in Egypt and later in the Far East. He served as the Consul General of France in Cairo during a critical period of Egyptian history (roughly 1871 to 1873/1874), a time defined by intense European competition for influence over the Suez Canal and Egyptian finances.. He served as Prime Minister three times during his career. His first term was between August 1878 and 23 February 1879. His second term was served from 10 January 1884 to 9 June 1888. His final term was between 16 April 1894 and 12 November 1895.

Frenchman, M. de Blignières,[189] as Minister of Public Works. It was in the highest degree improbable that a man of his intriguing and ambitious character would submit permanently to any such restraint, and before long he succeeded in working upon the disaffection of those persons whose privileges were threatened or affected by European control, to such an extent that, by organizing a military riot, he was able to force Nubar Pasha to resign on February 20, 1879. At the same time he demanded much greater powers for himself, including the right to preside over the Cabinet, and to have all measures submitted to his approval—demands which were strongly resisted by his European Ministers, who invoked the support of their Governments.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Feb. 21, 1879.

> I have just received your telegram announcing your concurrence in Waddington's draft instructions to Cairo, and I shall communicate it to him forthwith.
>
> Waddington seemed quite firm on the point of not allowing the Khedive to resume his personal power, and would no doubt be ready to join in any practical steps for that purpose; but in the meantime it may be feared that His Highness is consolidating his resumption of power. Waddington looks upon the whole affair as a simple manœvre of the Khedive to upset the new system of government. It does not in fact seem likely that so arrant a coward would have risked

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> his own precious person, if he had not had a pretty good understanding with the rioters. Public opinion in France would, I think, support Waddington in taking strong measures. There does not seem to be any one but Nubar of position enough to be a Prime Minister of any independence; Waddington seemed fully aware that if the Khedive is present at the council of Ministers, no Egyptian Minister will open his lips.
>
> Godeaux telegraphed last night that order having been restored, the presence of a ship of war at Alexandria might not be necessary, but Waddington thought on the contrary that it would be "essential in order to produce a salutary impression on the Khedive, and keep him in some check."

Nubar Pasha was regarded as English and anti-French, and his fall was, therefore, received at Paris with some degree of complacency; but the feeling was not sufficiently strong to make the Government hold out against his restoration to office, should that be considered necessary for the purpose of checking the Khedive, and the tendency was to make no suggestions and to wait for the lead of England, it being understood that both Governments were resolved not to consent to any change of the political system in Egypt.

[189] Ernest-Gabriel de Blignières (1834 – 1900), a prominent French administrator and diplomat. He was a French civil servant and became Inspector General of Finance. He became prefect of department in France and then minister in Egypt. His role in international finance and colonial administration made him a key figure in French foreign policy.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
March 1, 1879.

As to Egypt, I gather from your telegram to-day that Waddington looks on our message to Vivian[190] as in the nature of an ultimatum, and he is puzzled what we are to do next if it should be rejected. We do not in the least look on it as an ultimatum, and it is not so phrased. We may well receive either from the Khedive or the Agents some alternative proposal which may be

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discussed, and perhaps hammered into an acceptable arrangement at least for a time. But in any case our position cannot be worse here than if we had acquiesced at once in the results of the conspiracy against Nubar; while the chances are that it will enable us to arrive at some plan for partially curbing the Khedive, which at all events shall partially disguise the check we have undoubtedly received. The causes are obscure. It is evident there has been imprudence. I wish I could be quite satisfied there has been perfect loyalty.

Writing a day or two later, Lord Salisbury explained that he was in some difficulty, as Mr. Vivian and Mr. Rivers Wilson held different opinions. The former wanted to conciliate the Khedive by not forcing upon him the restoration of Nubar, while Mr. Rivers Wilson strongly insisted upon his return. Lord Salisbury himself was inclined to the latter course because "otherwise the Khedive will be like a horse who has succeeded in beating his rider, and will never be safe for that rider to mount again," but eventually decided against it. From the following letter it looks as if the retirement of the hapless British Representative at Tunis was intended as a peace offering to the cause of Anglo-French joint action in Egypt.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
March 6, 1879.

It is better always to get the credit of one's good actions, which are naturally few. Will you kindly tell M. Waddington in the most unofficial way in the world that—— having returned himself as 67 years of age (he entered the service 55 years ago, and therefore must have begun his public labours at a precocious age) we have suppressed the Consulate General of Tunis, and that there will henceforth be a man on reduced salary, a consul or agent, after the close of this month.

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I think the French will find difficulties enough with Italy if they ever try to increase their influence in Tunis; but that is no affair of ours. We have hot water enough elsewhere without desiring to boil any in Tunis.

One good turn deserves another, and I hope Waddington will feel himself bound to keep his agents from Anglophobia in Turkey.

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[190] Her Britannic Majesty's Agent and Consul General in Cairo. (LN). Hussey Crespigny Vivian, 3rd Baron Vivian (1834 – 1893).was a prominent British diplomat who served as the British Agent and Consul-General in Egypt during two critical periods in the 1870s. From 1873 to 1874 he was Consul-General in Alexandria. His second term of office from 1876 to 1879 was during the period of financial instability which led to the deposition of Khedive Ismail Pasha. (*Google Gemini*)

> The Egyptian compromise will do very well for the time. It seems doubtful whether Nubar is worth anything now. An Oriental does not easily pluck up a spirit when he has once been beaten, and Nubar is reported to have told friends in England that he knew that whenever the Khedive had done with him there was a cup of coffee waiting for him.

The compromise referred to took the form of a new Egyptian Ministry containing the two English and French representatives, and nominally presided over by the Khedive's eldest son, Prince Tewfik.[191] The experiment, however, of trying to keep a Ministry in office in spite of the opposition of the chief of the State did not last long, for in April the irrepressible Khedive dismissed his Ministers and installed Cherif Pasha[192] as Prime Minister. This spirited action caused M. Waddington much perplexity, as he did not believe that French public opinion would allow him to take a slap in the face quietly from the Khedive. The French bondholders were too influential to think of throwing them over, and then there was the *Crédit Foncier*,[193] a more or less Government establishment, which no French Government could allow to come to grief. There was a keen desire to maintain the concert between England and France on Egyptian affairs, but if the bondholders suspected that England was likely to be lukewarm on their behalf, there was a strong

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probability that the French Government might be forced to act alone in the enforcement of French claims. Lord Salisbury on his side was naturally reluctant to be identified with the bondholders' cause.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
April 10, 1879.

> I see by your telegrams which have arrived to-day that M. Waddington suggests as a means of coercion against the Khedive that MM. Rothschild should refuse to pay him the balance of the loan. Mr. Rivers Wilson had made the same suggestion to the Baron. But the latter, in a message sent yesterday through his son, repudiated any idea of such a proceeding as dishonourable, and attributed the suggestion to momentary excitement.
>
> With respect to the second idea, the only question is whether the Sultan will ever summon up courage to take such a step, and if he does, whether he can enforce it. If it can be done quite smoothly, perhaps it would be the best course; but I speak with some doubt.

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[191] Mohamed Tewfik Pasha (Muḥammad Tawfīq Bāshā; 1852 – 1892), also known as Tawfiq of Egypt, was khedive of Egypt and the Sudan between 1879 and 1892 and the sixth ruler from the Muhammad Ali Dynasty. He inherited a state suffering under the financial and political mismanagement of his predecessor Isma'il.

[192] Ali Pasha Mohamed Sherif (1834 – 1897) (alt spelling, from French Ali Pacha Chérif) was an Albanian-Egyptian government official and a renowned breeder of Arabian horses during the late 19th century.

[193] *Crédit Foncier de France* (CFF) was a major French bank, active from 1852 to 2019 when its activities were entirely subsumed into *Groupe Banque Populaire Caisse d'Epargne* (BPCE) although the brand name appears to remain active.

It may be quite tolerable and even agreeable to the French Government to go into partnership with the bondholders; or rather to act as sheriffs' officer for them. But to us it is a new and very embarrassing sensation. Egypt never can prosper so long as some 25 per cent. of her revenue goes in paying interest on her debt. We have no wish to part company with France: still less do we mean that France should acquire in Egypt any special ascendency; but subject to these two considerations I should be glad to be free of the companionship of the bondholders.

M. Waddington's "second idea" evidently referred to the deposing of the Khedive by means of the Sultan; but his difficulty lay in the old French jealousy of the Porte exercising influence over the internal affairs of

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Egypt, and during the reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz the consequence of that influence had certainly been a constant drain of money from Cairo to Constantinople. One suggestion was that the Sultan should summon the Khedive to come to Constantinople to do homage, a ceremony which he had never yet performed, and a refusal to obey would have made him a rebel in the Sultan's eyes; but the objection to this course was that the Khedive might, if he went, take large sums of money with him and so propitiate his suzerain.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
April 16, 1879.

Waddington's policy is not very intelligible. I suppose it is a compromise between a sense of the danger of doing anything strong, and of the necessity of satisfying the *Crédit Foncier*. In the despatch which you will receive we have done our best to accommodate ourselves to Waddington's view, without taking up a wholly untenable position.

There is one thing which it is necessary not to forget, though I could not mention it in the despatch. We have very different audiences to please; and though we may agree upon the actual intimation to be given to the Khedive and the Sultan respectively, the argument leading up to those communications cannot in both cases be precisely the same. We must lay stress on separate points, and the argument derived from the Khedive's application for a European Minister must be treated differently by the two Powers, as the circumstances were not similar. We should therefore avoid identic notes, though we may make a concerted representation.

The communication to the Porte had better be indiscreetly communicated to the Khedive's agent there, who is an intelligent man. It may only result in producing a very heavy payment to the Porte. But that, under existing circumstances, will itself be of advantage.

I suppose that Waddington means to upset the Ottoman Bank project as a retort for the failure of Tocqueville's.

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> What does he think of Martino's[194] share in the recent Egyptian crisis? Italy is likely to be a plague to all of us.

In France there was a violent party, more or less supported by Gambetta, which desired to send some energetic Agent to Egypt who would bully the Khedive successfully. Unfortunately, such energetic agents were extremely likely to quarrel with their British colleagues, whereas M. Waddington, who was peaceably disposed, wished to appoint quiet and unobtrusive representatives who would work harmoniously, and implicitly follow their instructions. There was, however, some excuse for the men of action, as a very well-founded suspicion prevailed in Paris that the Russians, and even the Germans, were busy at Rome inciting the Italians to make trouble for England and France at Cairo. Moreover, Gambetta and his friends believed, probably with reason, that the Khedive would never have gone so far in defying England and France if he had not felt that he was backed up by other Powers, as well as by Italy.

Mr. Vivian, the British agent in Cairo, who had been summoned to London, returned to his post at the end of April bearing a note, the gist of which was, that the two Governments, in view of the iniquities of the Khedive, 'reserved to themselves an entire liberty of appreciation and action in defending their interests in Egypt, and in seeking the arrangements best calculated to secure the good government and prosperity of the country.' In other words, the Khedive was warned that he had better be careful; but there was, so far, no hint of deposition.

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In Lord Salisbury's letter to Lord Lyons, enclosing a copy of the above note, there is an interesting personal opinion on the question of governing Orientals by Europeans. "With all these Oriental populations I suspect that the rôle of Europeans should in the main be confined to positions of criticism and control. They can only govern after absolute conquest, and then expensively. The difficulty of governing without conquest is, of course, enormously increased when two nationalities have to be provided for, and two Governments to be consulted."

The period following the return of Mr. Vivian to his post was marked by a violent and entirely unreasonable campaign against England in the French press, it being thought, for some unknown reason, that France had been abandoned, and M. Waddington took the somewhat unusual course of sending a message to Lord Salisbury through Mr. Rivers Wilson, instead of communicating in the ordinary manner.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
May 21, 1879.

> On Monday, Rivers Wilson sent me word that he had a message to deliver to me from Waddington. Accordingly I asked him to come and see me yesterday to deliver it. It was to the effect that Waddington was willing and anxious to move the Porte to dethrone the Khedive, if England would join in this step. I represented that there were three difficulties. The Sultan might not assent: if he did, the Khedive might not yield. If the latter did yield, the successor might be either feeble or bad, and we should be

[194] This could be Ferdinando Martini (1840 – 1928) an Italian writer and politician who served as the governor of Italian Eritrea from 1897 to 1907.

called upon to support him in one case, and replace him in the other. To the first objection Wilson replied that Waddington had no apprehensions as to the Sultan's consent; to the second he (Wilson) and every person who knew

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Egypt well, did not doubt that the moment a Firman[195] was issued, the Khedive would fall; as to the third, he could only say that Prince Tewfik was a compendium of the cardinal virtues.

If Waddington did not communicate his proposal to you, I am obliged to consider what possible motive he could have had for taking this circuitous route, unless he meant to disavow the offer later on. If he says nothing to you about it, it may be worth while to sound him.

If there were no France in the way, I should be disposed to give no reply to the Khedive's note we received by the last mail, or at least only to say that since the dismissal of the English Minister, the Khedive's finance had become so hopelessly tangled, partly owing to his extravagance, partly to the conflict with other Powers into which the decree of April 22nd has brought him, that we must reserve our judgment with respect to all questions of financial control till the position of affairs had become more intelligible. I think that on some such plea as that we might stand by and look on for a few months till the Khedive has knocked himself to pieces, which he inevitably will do. The fiscal condition is now so hopeless that I am rather grateful to the Khedive for refusing to put it into the hands of an English Minister. I doubt whether any European can now undertake it without discredit, until the country has gone into liquidation. The disproportion between the debt and the revenue—joined to the difficulties which have now been raised by the action of the courts and the attitude of the other Powers, makes effective or even humane government hopeless till there has been a bankruptcy. But then that would not suit a purely Bourse policy like that of France. We must take notice of this difference of the French view, and we may have to modify our policy accordingly; for we cannot allow France to go on alone, and we will not part company with her if we can possibly help it. But in this state of our relative views and wishes, it is already for us to wait, and for her to propose. If left alone, our disposition would be to find an excuse for waiting, and if we move it will be because France is urging us. We should therefore naturally wait till France

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made a proposal to us, and should be inclined to cross-examine her as to what will be her next move after that, in the various contingencies which may result from the course they propose. I think, however, you might open communications by mentioning, quite unofficially, how much pain the articles in the *République Française* and the *Débuts* have given us. To ordinary papers we should of course have paid no attention; but one of them is, or was till very recently, edited by a gentleman in the French Foreign Office; the other is in part the property of a Minister. We are utterly unable to understand on what foundation the reproaches rest that we have shown reserves and hesitations in the pursuit of the joint Egyptian policy. On

[195] A firman 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. The English word firman comes from the Persian farmān meaning "decree" or "order".

the contrary, if we had occupied towards France the position which Servia occupies towards Russia, our compliance could hardly have been more exact. But this outbreak of causeless wrath justifies us in asking what France wants, and what she complains of.

You will of course say as much of this, or as much more as you may think wise. But it may be as well to show that we are not insensible to this attempt to work Parliament against us by revelations or communications on matters which the French Government themselves have charged us to treat as confidential.

The attacks on England in the French press were not inspired, as Lord Salisbury supposed, by the French Foreign Office, but by Gambetta, who desired a strong policy in Egypt and seized the opportunity to fall upon Waddington. The latter, however, by this time had made up his mind as to what should be done.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, May 22, 1879.

As you will have seen by my telegram, what Waddington said to me yesterday was, that there appeared to him to be only two alternatives with regard to the Egyptian question—to depose the

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Khedive or to establish a Control. He talked a good deal more about the Control than the deposition; but when I asked him if this meant that the Control was the alternative he preferred, he declined to express any preference for the one or the other. If we are to wait until he has devised measures (and this is what he told me he was about) for establishing an efficacious control we need not fear being called upon to act in a hurry. I quite agree with you that we cannot let France go on alone in Egypt; for if we do, she may go lengths which will produce something a great deal more dangerous than a mere coolness between us. French power and French feeling are very different from what they were some years ago, when the French would have let us do almost anything we chose in Egypt, if we would have taken care of the interests of the French bondholders.

Nothing can be plainer than Lord Salisbury's desire to act in concert with France, and to have regard to French interests in Egypt, but the constant attacks made upon British policy and the persistent hostility of French agents, not only in Egypt, but elsewhere, rendered the task anything but easy. Gambetta's hostility was partly due to the fact that he was an enthusiastic Phil-Hellene, and considered that not enough was being done for Greece in the way of procuring for her accessions of territory at the expense of Turkey. It is as well to point out that, whereas the Turks had been compelled to cede territory to States with which they had been at war, they were at this time being pressed to cede territory to Greece because that Power had remained at peace.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
June 6, 1879.

The recent course of the French newspapers which have the credit of being inspired

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by Gambetta and Léon Say is certainly a puzzle. Looking over the course of negotiations between us and Waddington on Egypt, I should find it very difficult to say which of the two Governments had pulled the other on, and which had dragged the other back. As far as any important negotiations go, I should say that we had been a shade more in favour of active measures than the other side. The two newspapers in question are evidently well informed; and therefore their assumption that we have prevented the French from acting must be put on for a purpose; what purpose it is difficult to say. The most obvious solution—bearing in mind the English friendships of the two statesmen concerned—is that the whole movement is meant to operate on English internal politics, and not on European politics at all: and this view is supported by the use which has actually been made of the controversy here. The incident is common enough in diplomatic history: but it has always been bitterly resented by the Government which is the subject of that species of attack. But in this case there is some doubt as to how far Waddington is implicated. Nothing is more difficult to deal with than a "Marionette Government," because the marionettes are not responsible, and you cannot get at the man who pulls the strings. There is one spot in the diplomatic battlefield—almost the only one—where we have been exposed to risk, and have consequently been anxious—the Balkan Peninsula: and on this we have been systematically opposed by France. Ring,[196] Coutouly[197] and Fournier have played us every kind of trick. But all the time, nothing could have been more unexceptionable than Waddington's language and instructions. So it is with this newspaper warfare. The secondary agents, who are popularly supposed to act from inspiration are undisguisedly hostile. Waddington's demeanour all the time is imperturbably friendly. Is it helplessness, or bad faith? The question is one of considerable practical importance: for if we are to measure the co-operation of France by the action of Fournier and Gambetta, we shall do wisely to retire, gently but effectually, from a perilous partnership. And it is impossible to ignore this aspect of the case in considering the precise line to be pursued in the two pending questions of Greece and Egypt.

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Our object in Egypt, ever since we promised some four years ago not to take it, is to see that our own interests are not injured and that French interests receive adequate, but not excessive consideration. If, however, Gambetta means mischief, it may be wise for us to seek the protection of English interests only, and leave the French to take care of themselves. This would be done by pushing forward the other Powers.

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[196] Maximilien-Napoléon, Baron de Ring (1827 – 1888) was a prominent French diplomat active during the 1870s and 1880s. During the mid-to-late 1870s, he served in significant roles within the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, often involved in the complex "Eastern Question" (the stability and territories of the Ottoman Empire). From 1879 to 1880 he was Consul General in Egypt. He was the French Agent and Consul-General in Cairo during a period of intense Anglo-French rivalry. He was known for being highly assertive—some said too much so—in defending French influence against British encroachment, which eventually led to his recall. (*Google Gemini*)

[197] Gustave de Coutouly (1838 – 1912) was a prominent French diplomat and author. He is perhaps best known for his role in the organization of Eastern Rumelia following the Treaty of Berlin. He served on the European Commission charged with establishing the organic statute and administration of this autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire. He was the French Minister (equivalent to Ambassador) to Bucharest from 1885 to 1894, where he played a major role in strengthening Franco-Romanian relations. (*Google Gemini*)

> Their interference would be fatal to Egyptian solvency, and consequently to French bondholders. But it would be as fatal a bar to French preponderance as the plan of duplicating all appointments, and as none of these great Powers are naval, we could look after the Canal just as easily if they were masters in Egypt, as under the present Anglo-French system. If the French are really friends, the Anglo-French system may be maintained in spite of many inconveniences in order to cement that friendship. But if Gambetta and Fournier are to be taken as the directing force in French politics, the Anglo-French system is merely a make-believe, and will only draw us into a succession of crises in which we shall probably be outwitted. This dilemma merits very careful consideration. Greece is a less important and more transitory affair. In order to avoid division in the Congress we went rather further than we thought quite wise; and we have no wish to go further still. Of course, abstractedly, it would be much better that all the Hellenic populations should be under a Hellenic ruler. But Turkey is still a fact of which account must be taken; and the danger of Turkey resisting is very serious. The fact that Greece has not won this territory as prize of war, nor earned it as the consideration of any service done, but is to gain it merely by her skill in singing diplomatic dithyrambics,[198] appears to irritate the Turks intensely. It is not our present policy to adopt a course which shall induce the Sultan to listen to the Russian proposals which are so freely placed before him. We would not therefore, in any case, take a leading part in pressing the cession on him. But we doubt extremely the wisdom of exciting anew the Moslem fanaticism, by demanding a town to which the Albanians attach so much importance as Janina.

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> However, in this question we should have been a good deal influenced by the wishes of France, if we could have thought that by exalting the influence of Fournier we were strengthening a friend. But can we do so?

There was, in reality, no foundation for Lord Salisbury's suspicions that Gambetta and his allies were seeking to interfere in British internal politics. The objectionable articles were written under an erroneous impression that France had been outwitted, and that Mr. Vivian, in pursuance of secret instructions from his Government, was working for the failure of the joint Anglo-French administration in Egypt and for the establishment of exclusive British influence. But as the attacks in the French press mainly took the form of abusing England for not agreeing to energetic proposals made by the French Government, it was a legitimate grievance against M. Waddington that he never took any steps whatever to contradict this perfectly baseless accusation. As for the conduct of French agents who were continually intriguing against their English colleagues, it is probable that M. Waddington was able to exercise little or no control over them, and it has already been mentioned that some of them were in the habit of corresponding directly with Gambetta behind the back of their official chief. Lord Lyons, who naturally was anxious to make things as easy for the French as possible, recommended that the vanity and susceptibility of French diplomatists abroad and of the public at home, should be studied as much as possible, since there was a universal feeling that France was now too strong to play a secondary part anywhere, and that sacrifices on our part were

[198] Wild and boisterous

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preferable to allowing her to throw herself into the arms of Russia. Lord Salisbury therefore persevered in the difficult task of endeavouring to co-operate cordially with the French Government, and M. Waddington applied himself to elaborating the scheme of Dual Control which was eventually adopted. Meanwhile it had become apparent that, in order to obtain anything like a successful result, the Khedive Ismail must be got rid of somehow, a course which was urged not only by Gambetta, but by the French Agent at Cairo. Joint efforts were made by the French and British Agents to induce him to abdicate in favour of Prince Tewfik, which were seconded by the representations of Germany and Austria; but these were of no avail, and the Gordian knot was not cut until the Sultan suddenly intervened on June 26. On that day a telegram arrived from Constantinople, deposing Ismail by Imperial Iradé,[199] and conferring the Government of Egypt upon his eldest son Prince Tewfik, who was at once proclaimed Khedive without any disturbance of tranquillity.

The action of the Sultan was not only sudden but unexpected, and Lord Salisbury at once took steps to assure the French Government that it was not due to the instigation of Her Majesty's Government.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
June 26, 1879.

> Pray assure M. Waddington that the Turkish move reported to-day does not proceed in any way from our suggestion. We have only urged in the very strongest terms that the Sultan should not interfere with what we were doing in Cairo. But the Sultan seems to have been perfectly resolved to have a finger in the pie; and as he was not allowed to interfere to save the Khedive, he indemnified himself by interfering to upset him.

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> I am not specially in love with the Firman of 1873, which I see the Sultan has revoked. But I am afraid it will annoy Waddington, and therefore I am anxious he should be well convinced we had no hand in it.
>
> Now it is done, the wisest course we can take is to accept it, and devote our energies to procuring any new Firman that may be necessary to the present state of Egyptian finances. I don't think it will be any great evil if their power of raising armaments is limited. But on all this I should like to have Waddington's opinion.

M. Waddington was a sensible man, and therefore there was no difficulty in convincing him that England was not responsible for the Sultan's action; but French opinion generally was incredulous, and it was believed that the deposition of Ismail was the result of the rivalry at Constantinople between the French and British Ambassadors. The latter was unjustly suspected of a desire to reduce Egypt to the condition of a Turkish Pashalic,[200] and it was obvious that the revocation of the Firman indicated the intention of the Sultan to reassert his

[199] Iradé was the French term for a Hatt-i humayun which was the diplomatics term for a document or handwritten note of an official nature composed and personally signed by an Ottoman sultan. These notes were commonly written by the sultan personally, although they could also be transcribed by a palace scribe. They were written usually in response to, and directly on, a document submitted to the sultan by the grand vizier or another officer of the Ottoman government.
[200] The jurisdiction of a pasha.

influence over Egypt in a manner which French policy had consistently opposed. Although, therefore, the Sultan's action had delivered both England and France from a highly embarrassing situation, and had been taken at a most opportune moment, it was considered advisable, instead of expressing gratitude, to criticise adversely the form of the Imperial Iradé, and to insist upon the issue of another.

What was, however, of really more essential importance than the somewhat remote fear of Turkish interference was the question of how the Dual Control was to be effectively established.

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Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
July 7, 1879.

> Our perplexity as to the effect of the Firman has received a rather comical solution. No such Firman exists. An 'Iradé' is merely the Sultan's signature; and that was only given to the telegraphic message deposing Ismail. So that the revocation of the Firman of 1873 has not taken place, and the discussion as to the exact meaning of such a revocation seems to be premature. All that we now have to do is to prevent, if we can, any Firman at all being issued to Tewfik, and then every one will be happy.
>
> Tewfik is resolved to begin the Liquidation at once; and if it be true that interest is rolling up at the rate of £80,000 a month, there is good cause for his desire to hurry it. But the Controllers will hardly be enough. We want to have some hold over the government of Egypt, though we do not want to assume any overt responsibility. The great object seems to me to be to have representatives inside the offices who shall be able to report what the Government are doing to the Agents, and shall be able to give advice to the Government in accordance with the instructions of the Agents. If you have a European Minister, the Agent must be suppressed. I despair of making two talented Englishmen work side by side, without subordinating one to the other; and if we must choose between Agent and Minister as a vehicle of English influence, the former seems to me the easier to work with. He is not quasi-independent, and therefore will obey orders. He occupies a recognized and traditional position and therefore excites no jealousy either among Moslems or other Christian Powers; and he cannot be dismissed; and if his advice is not taken, or applied badly, the country he serves is not in the eyes of the world primarily responsible. The case on the other side is that the European Minister has more power. But has he? What power did Wilson enjoy? The only power Europeans can enjoy at Cairo rests on the fear which their Governments may happen to inspire, and this fear will operate as strongly through an Agent as through a Minister. We do not put European Ministers even into the

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> Governments of dependent Indian Provinces: and there we have, what we cannot have in Egypt for a long time, "bayonets to sit upon."
> We have made the mistake in Egypt and elsewhere, of underrating the vitality of the Moslem feeling. I am afraid M. Waddington is doing so with respect to Greece.

Another letter deals further with the question of Control, and contains some interesting reflections on moral influence.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
July 15, 1879.

I am very much of the opinion that the Control should take the form of inspection. It is the only form of Control likely to be effective. Actual authority we cannot exercise. We tried to do it through the European Ministers, but when the stress came, the disbanded officers proved to us that two pairs of arms are not much use against two thousand. The only form of Control we have is that which is called moral influence—which in practice is a combination of menace, objurgation, and worry. In this we are still supreme and have many modes of applying it—diplomatic notes, consular interviews, newspapers, blue books. We must devote ourselves to the perfecting of this weapon. And, obviously, the first condition of its use is complete knowledge of what is going in.

The exchange, therefore, of nominal authority for real inspectionship is a step in the right direction. It is facing facts. We must exert ourselves to open to these inspectors every avenue of information; and we must have a certain number of sub-inspectors paid by Egypt, who shall travel about, collecting information. It is essential, of course, that these last should know the language.

The division of the jurisdiction of the two inspectors is a serious puzzle. Upper and Lower Egypt certainly will not do, unless we have Lower Egypt. I had thought of a North and South division—the Nile—starting at Damietta. But I know Vivian does not like this; moreover I see difficulties about handing over Alexandria to the French.

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Waddington's proposal for a rotatory jurisdiction sounds odd. What would he think of it as applied to any other department of life—Ambassadors, Bishops, or Ministers? I suppose the frequency of what they call a "Prefectoral Movement" in France has put it into his head.

Would it be possible to fuse them into a board, giving them a native colleague to be chosen by themselves, and then decide by majority? I have spoken to Baring[201] about the Commission of Liquidation. I doubt his accepting the Control, though I think he would the Liquidation.

As to the Firman, we are agreed as to the limitation of armaments. I should be glad to see loans forbidden altogether. To an Oriental ruler they are like firewater to the Red Indians. I should be glad to see a declaration that the Powers would not recognize or encourage the payment of any loan contracted by the Egyptian Government after this date. They are not wanted to meet any present stress; but the fellaheen[202] are already loaded with quite as heavy a weight as they can bear.

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[201] Now Earl of Cromer. (LN). Evelyn Baring (1841 – 1917) was created Earl of Cromer in 1901. He was a British statesman, diplomat and colonial administrator. He served as the British controller-general in Egypt during 1879, part of the international control which oversaw Egyptian finances after the Egyptian bankruptcy of 1876. He later became the agent and consul-general in Egypt from 1883 to 1907 during the British occupation, prompted by the Urabi revolt. This position gave Baring *de facto* control over Egyptian finances and governance

[202] A fellah (plural fellaheen or fellahin) is a local farmer or agricultural labourer in the Middle East and North Africa. The word derives from the Arabic word for ploughman or tiller.

The question of appointing the Controllers and deciding what their functions were to be, gave rise to more difficulties, caused by the obvious desire of many Frenchmen to get the Egyptian finances entirely into French hands. Ultimately Major Baring and M. de Blignières were appointed, but their powers were not formally defined until November. By the decree of November 15, 1879, it was laid down that the Controllers should have full rights of inquiring into all branches of the administration; the rank of Ministers and seats in the Cabinet, although restricted to making suggestions; the power of appointing and dismissing subordinate officials; and it was further enacted that they were irremovable without the consent of their

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respective Governments. By this action the British and the French Governments practically assumed the responsibility of Government, and for some time to come Egypt ceased to give trouble.

In the month of June, 1879, an event had occurred which was of profound importance to all political parties in France. The Prince Imperial[203] had perished in Zululand, and with him had vanished the hopes of a resuscitated Empire. The tragedy of the Prince's death is heightened by the fact that it was only owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding that he was ever allowed to accompany the expedition. On March 1, Lord Salisbury writing to Lord Lyons stated that the departure of the Prince Imperial was: *a mal entendu*[204] which we are unable to understand even here. The Government had very distinctly negatived it, but in consequence of some misapprehensions, our orders were not attended to by the military men, and he received encouragement which could not afterwards be withdrawn. If you think Waddington is at all sore on the matter, you are authorized to explain this fully to him. But I rather expect to hear from you that no importance is attached by the French Government to what has taken place.'

Two days later he again wrote:—

> I am very sorry to hear that so painful an impression was created in Paris. We have never been able to discover exactly how it was done, or why our already clearly expressed objection was disregarded. He was of course at liberty to go, and people who ought to have known better were at liberty to write private letters and go to railway stations. Of course nothing official has been done, but the border line between official and private has been very closely trenched upon. However, all we can do now is to express our sincere regret.

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At Lord Lyons's next interview with M. Waddington, the latter asked (not in a complaining manner) how the Prince's expedition to Zululand had been brought about, and was told in

[203] Napoléon, Prince Imperial (Napoléon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph Bonaparte; 1856 – 1 June 1879), also known as Louis-Napoléon, was the only child of Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, and Empress Eugénie. After his father was dethroned in 1870, he moved to England with his family. In England, he trained as a British Army officer. Keen to see action, he persuaded the British authorities to allow him to participate in the Anglo-Zulu War. In 1879, serving with British forces, he was killed in a skirmish with a group of Zulus. His early death caused an international sensation and sent shockwaves throughout Europe, as he was the last serious dynastic hope for the restoration of the House of Bonaparte to the throne of France.
[204] Misunderstanding.

reply that the Prince had settled it himself through personal friends and that Her Majesty's Government had by no means approved of it. President Grévy alluded to the matter in the course of a conversation with the Prince of Wales, who happened to be in Paris, and also expressed no disapproval; in fact, he went so far as to remark: *qu'il avait très bien fait*.[205] Thus the principal personages in France evidently did not consider the matter of much importance; but, on the other hand, the Republican press showed considerable irritation, which, under the circumstances, was perhaps not entirely unnatural, as it did not seem credible that the Prince could have started without the approval of the British Government. When the news of his death arrived, it was felt that, for the time being at all events, Bonapartism had been practically crushed out of existence.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, June 20, 1879.

> In hearing of the sad end of the short life of the Prince Imperial, one's first thought is for the Empress, whose bitter cup of sorrows is now full.
>
> The immediate political result is the utter disorganization of the Imperial Party. It was far from strong, but still it was the most efficacious element of opposition to the Republicans, and they will now have things still more their own way. The Fleurys,[206] Rouhers,[207] and the old Imperial following can never hope to live to recover from the blow. I suppose Prince Napoleon will hardly put himself forward in the position of a pretender to the Imperial Crown, and he would

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> have no party with him if he did. In the more remote future his eldest son may prove a more formidable candidate than poor Prince Louis could have been. He is said to be a remarkably clever, attractive youth, and a thorough Bonaparte in appearance. No hereditary responsibility for Sedan can be cast upon him; he is undoubtedly of the Bonaparte race, and he has been brought up in France. For the present, however, Prince Louis's melancholy death is a decided accession to Republican strength.

The death of the Prince excited the sympathies of all classes in France with the stricken Empress, but when in July, preparations were being made for the funeral in England, the bitterness of French party politics displayed itself in that hostility which, carried beyond the grave, it is the least possible to condone.

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[205] That he had done very well.

[206] Émile Félix Fleury (1815 – 1884) was a French general and diplomat. He was in charge of diplomatic missions, notably at the Court of King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy. In 1869 he was appointed ambassador to St. Petersburg. After the French defeat in the Franco-German War of 1870 and the fall of the Empire, he abandoned his duties and went into exile in Switzerland with his family.

[207] Eugène Rouher (1814 – 1884) was a French statesman of the Second Empire. The death of the Prince Imperial in 1879 put an end to the serious chances of the Bonapartists, although Rouher sought to secure the recognition of Prince Napoleon, son of Napoleon's brother Jerome, as heir to the Imperial honours. Rouher lost his reason after a stroke of paralysis in 1883, and died a few months later.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 10, 1879.

The susceptibility the French Government is showing about the funeral of the Prince Imperial is neither wise nor dignified. If ever there was an occasion on which political animosities might be left in abeyance, surely this is one. The death of the Prince Imperial has put an end to many hopes and aspirations, and has inclined numerous adherents of the family to acquiesce in the present state of things. It is certainly not politic to require of people in this frame of mind an overt manifestation of heartlessness and ingratitude to the dynasty which has had so mournful an end. The ceremony so manifestly relates to the past and not to the future that there can be no reasonable objection to allowing the old adherents of the family, whether Marshals and Generals, or merely civilians to go over to attend it. I fancy that Grévy himself and the Republicans *de la vieille*[208] cannot get over, even on such an occasion as this, their old hostility to the Empire.

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These almost incredibly vindictive feelings again manifested themselves when a proposal was made that a monument to the unfortunate Prince should be placed in Westminster Abbey. M. Waddington, who must have been heartily ashamed of the part he was forced to play, remonstrated privately against the project, and intimated to Lord Lyons that he thought of writing to Dean Stanley,[209] whom he happened to know, and of urging him not to consent to it.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
July 22, 1879.

I think, on the whole, I had better not answer your despatch officially about the Prince Imperial's statue; but you can tell Waddington unofficially as much of the following as you may think useful. As soon as I got it, I communicated with the Prime Minister, who sent to the Dean of Westminster. The Dean, when the message reached him, had already forwarded to all the newspapers a letter which you have read in the issues of this morning. On reading it we came to the conclusion that the matter had gone too far to be recalled.

On historical considerations the Dean proposes to put the monument into Henry the Seventh's chapel, and for that purpose, undoubtedly, the Queen's permission must be obtained. But as regards the Abbey in general he is absolutely supreme. He might put up a statue of Nana Sahib,[210] if he chose. So we must decline to accept any responsibility for his proceedings. As he has publicly made the announcement that it

[208] Of the old guard or school.
[209] Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815 – 1881), known as Dean Stanley, was an English Anglican priest and ecclesiastical historian. Dean Stanley was born in Alderley Edge, in Cheshire, where his father, Edward Stanley, later Bishop of Norwich, was then rector. The Stanley family would be well known to Lord Newton who was a near neighbour.
[210] Nana Sahib (1824 – after 1857) would have been considered an arch villain He was born Nana Govind Dhondu Pant and was an Indian aristocrat and fighter who led the Siege of Cawnpore (Kanpur) during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 against the East India Company. He forced the British garrison in Kanpur to surrender and subsequently ordered the killing of the survivors, briefly gaining control of the city. After the British recaptured Kanpur, Nana Saheb disappeared, and conflicting accounts surround his later life and death.

is his intention, if not interfered with, to give the requisite permission, it is clearly impossible for us to 'apply pressure' to induce him to give way. The motive for doing so would have to be confessed and would cause much misapprehension.

I have expressed a wish to see the inscription before it is put up, and I have no doubt I

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shall be allowed to do so. I think I can assure M. Waddington that there is not the slightest danger of anything about Napoleon IV. being contained in it.

The monument was never erected, the project meeting with much opposition in Parliament as calculated to offend the susceptibilities of the French Government.

It must be admitted that the circumstances surrounding the death of this unfortunate Prince reflect discredit, though in an unequal degree, upon both the French and the British Governments. If the French Government showed a petty and vindictive spirit totally unworthy of a great and powerful nation, the misunderstanding which enabled the Prince to go to South Africa; his vague and indefinite status with respect to the expeditionary force; the equally vague conditions attaching to his relations with Captain Carey,[211] which were partly responsible for his death; the unhappy suggestion of the Abbey monument; the helpless attitude of the Government in the face of an enterprising ecclesiastic; and the subsequent unseemly discussion in the House of Commons, are eloquent of slipshod and careless methods which are discreditable to British administration and constitute a somewhat humiliating page in the national history.

The autumn of 1879 was marked by the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance, hailed at the time by Lord Salisbury as "glad tidings of great joy," and destined profoundly to influence European politics for many years to come. In spite of assurances given by Bismarck himself, by Andrassy, and by Haymerle,[212] this

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new grouping of two first-class military Powers caused much perturbation at Paris, which was certainly not allayed by Lord Salisbury's benediction, and provided convenient material for an attack upon the tottering Waddington administration.

[211] Jahleel Brenton Carey (1847 – 1883) was a British officer who became notorious for his alleged responsibility for the death in action of Napoléon, Prince Imperial (1856 – 1879) at the hands of Zulu warriors in South Africa. Jahleel Carey was the son of Adolphus Frederick Carey, Vicar of Brixham, Devon, a member of the Carey family of Guernsey in the Channel Islands.

[212] Baron Heinrich Karl von Haymerle (1828 – 1881) was an Austrian statesman born and educated in Vienna. He served in the diplomatic corps at Athens, Dresden, and Frankfurt as Secretary of Legation; and served as ambassador in Copenhagen (1864), took part in negotiating the Treaty of Prague (1866), and from Berlin went to Constantinople (1868), Athens (1869), The Hague (1872), and in 1877 to the Italian court. He represented Austria-Hungary at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and served as foreign minister from 1879 to 1881. In this post he was especially active in effecting friendly relations with Italy and cementing the alliance with Germany.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Nov. 14, 1879.

As to French internal politics, the most striking feature is the somewhat vague but almost universal feeling of uneasiness about the future which pervades France. It is impossible not to see that this feeling has increased even during the few weeks that have elapsed since I went away on leave in August. I suppose that the immediate fear is that the Waddington Ministry will be succeeded by one more Radical, and that thus, step by step, the Ultra-Reds will get the Government into their hands.

When I first saw Waddington on my return, he was in good spirits, thinking that the threatened attacks upon him about the amnesty, the Government, and especially the diplomatic appointments, had blown over. Now, however, he is menaced with an interpellation on the Austro-German understanding. This understanding is, of course, extremely unpalatable to the French, and among them the general belief is that it binds Austria to assist Germany, in case of need, to defend Alsace and Lorraine against France. Waddington has the most positive assurances from Bismarck, Andrassy and Haymerle that there is nothing against France in it, but this is not enough to reassure the cavillers. The intention seems to be to reproach Waddington with this understanding generally, as indicating the failure of his Foreign Policy, and in particular to blame him for having an Ambassador at Vienna who neither prevented, nor found it out, and an Ambassador in London who did not make the French policy on the subject properly understood by the English Government. It seems that it is intended to argue that you

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would not have spoken of the understanding in the terms you used at Manchester, if you had known the painful impression it had made in France.

There are two opinions in France on the Foreign Policy to be now adopted. Perhaps the general, unreflecting public are inclined to throw themselves into the arms of Russia. The wise heads (and there is some reason to hope that Gambetta may be among them) look rather to England, and are willing to conciliate her by supporting her views in the East. It may be worth while to take this feeling into account, and perhaps with that view rather to put forward the reinstatement of Khaireddin and Midhat as the objects in view, than exclusively English appointments.

It seems to be a more or less established rule that when an English Foreign Secretary makes a speech, Ambassadors should write and expatiate upon the admirable effect which has been produced abroad, and Lord Lyons's comment upon Lord Salisbury's Manchester speech approaches more nearly to criticism than appears elsewhere in his correspondence. The charge of ignorance brought against the French Ambassador at Vienna was probably quite correct, but the British Embassy at Vienna must have been in the same case, for the existence of the Austro-German alliance was first discovered by that extremely able public servant, the late Sir Joseph Crowe,[213] As for the alleged inaction of the French Ambassador at London,

[213] At that period British Consul-General at Düsseldorf. (LN) Sir Joseph Archer Crowe (1825 – 1896) was an English journalist, consular official and art historian. Through the influence of Lord John Russell, Crowe was appointed consul-general for Saxony in 1860, and in this capacity he represented French interests at Leipzig during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. In 1872 he was appointed consul-general for Westphalia and the Rhenish Provinces in Düsseldorf and in 1880 commercial

that official was a retired admiral, whom apparently Waddington seldom seems to have consulted, and over whose unconscious head business was habitually transacted by the French Foreign Office.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Nov. 21, 1879.

We are within a week of the opening of the session, but the situation has not become

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more clear. Gambetta and Waddington have a personal dislike to each other, and no doubt Gambetta would be glad to oust Waddington, and to put in his place some new Minister for Foreign Affairs, such as the Marquis de Noailles,[214] with some creature of his own, such as Spüller[215] as *adlatus* or Under Secretary of State. But then Gambetta would find it difficult to do this without bringing about such a break up of the Ministry as would raise the question of his own taking office. But if those who ought to know him well judge aright, he does not wish to come into power until he sees his way to doing something very great—in fact to getting back Alsace and Lorraine.

Gambetta professes to be strongly in favour of the English Alliance, and for that and for other reasons, to make a liberal treaty of commerce with us. I do not, however, imagine that his ideas of a liberal treaty go beyond maintaining, or nearly so, the tariffs as they stand in the existing Anglo-French Treaties.

I imagine he has thought of going to England himself whenever he has a good opportunity, not with a view to putting himself into the hands of Sir Charles Dilke[216] and taking part in any Ultra-Radical demonstration, but rather with a desire of conciliating the moderate public opinion in England, and showing that he has no desire to promote a Republican Propaganda abroad. He seems to have a decidedly friendly feeling towards the present English Ministry.

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attaché to the embassies at Berlin and Vienna. In 1882 he was promoted to be commercial attaché for the whole of Europe, based in Paris.

[214] Emmanuel-Henri-Victurnien, marquis de Noailles (1830 – 1909) was a French diplomat, historian and literary critic. He served as envoy to the United States in 1872, and was ambassador to Italy in 1873, to the Ottoman Empire from 1882 until 1886 and to Germany from 1896 to 1902.

[215] Eugène Spuller (1835 – 1896) was a French politician and writer. After studying law at Dijon, he went to Paris, where he was called to the bar, and became close to Léon Gambetta, collaborating with him in 1868 in the foundation of the *Revue politique*. He was minister of education, religion and the fine arts in Maurice Rouvier's cabinet of 1887; minister of foreign affairs under Pierre Tirard (1889 – 1890), and minister of education in 1894 in the Casimir-Perier cabinet.

[216] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, 2nd Baronet (1843 – 1911) was a British Liberal and Radical politician and writer. He was a prominent figure in late Victorian radical politics. He was an early supporter of republicanism and later a leading critic of Whig dominance within the Liberal Party in the United Kingdom. Dilke played an important role in the reform legislation of 1883 – 1885, supported organised labour and women's rights, and was widely read for his writings on international affairs

I have heard that the Russian Grand Dukes had been led by General Chanzy to expect a much more warm and cordial reception at Paris than they actually met with, and that consequently they were by no means pleased.

Waddington seems to be as little prepared to go into the Newfoundland question as he was two months ago. The impression he makes upon me is the same that he made upon you. The Navy Department keep him in awe of them and prevent his acting upon the reasonable views he expressed to you at Berlin.

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The various difficulties in all parts of the world which were before long to trouble Anglo-French relations for many years, had now begun to manifest themselves in such places as Newfoundland, Tahiti, Réunion, the Gambia, and elsewhere. All these troublesome questions fell under the Marine Department, and their accumulation was productive of an irritation which hampered M. Waddington, whose position was also weakened by a rabid demand made upon the Ministry for Government appointments. In fact it was difficult to see how any French Ministry could last, if the American system of a fresh division of the spoils was to take place whenever a change occurred. In America the Executive is safe for four years, but in France, directly the places had been distributed, the disappointed combined to overthrow the unhappy Ministers responsible for the distribution.

Meanwhile his most formidable opponent, the ex-Democrat, Gambetta, had assumed the rôle of a *grand seigneur,* and gave sumptuous Parliamentary banquets which were pronounced by the highest gastronomic authorities to be exquisite in every respect. He contemplated a visit to London, and it is somewhat surprising to learn that the Democrat showed a very obvious prepossession in favour of the English Conservative Party.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Dec. 12, 1879.

Gambetta has heard with very great satisfaction that you and Lord Beaconsfield would be very glad of the opportunity of seeing him, which will be afforded if he carries into effect his idea of going to England. He feels that it would be essential that he should not make himself the guest or place himself under the special guidance of any political person on one side or the other. He

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Would probably go to an hotel. As to the time of his visit, he does not seem to have formed any definite plan. It seems to be connected in his mind with the Treaty of Commerce, and he seems inclined to secure himself a good reception by contributing first to making a favourable Treaty of Commerce. I suppose he and his countrymen would consider a Treaty simply renewing the arrangements of 1860 as very favourable to us. He absolutely repudiates all notion of anything like Republican propagandism. He has a strong bias in favour of the Conservatives in England. His sympathies are with an active Foreign Policy, and he has a grudge against the Liberals because they did not come to the assistance of France in the Franco-German war. He seems to follow English home politics very carefully. He wishes England and France to act together in the East, but considers that things have got into a horrid mess at Constantinople, and expresses regret that the French and English Embassies there do not pull more together.

I think one of his objects in going to England would be to show people in France that he is considered a person of sufficient importance to be admitted into the society of people of rank and station in aristocratic England.

He has also no doubt the higher object of making France and himself popular in England, so as to avert all risk of England's joining the Austro-German Alliance to the detriment of France.

The danger would be that he would form too great expectations of obtaining a positive alliance with England, and that if we did not come up to his expectations in this respect, he might in his disappointment, turn to Russia. But from this point of view, the most dangerous thing would be to *froisser*[217] his susceptibility by showing any coldness beforehand about his visit.

He undertakes to let us know whenever he comes to any resolution about going to England.

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From the above letter it will be seen how much importance was attached to Gambetta's views, and how desirable it was considered to secure his goodwill; but apparently the visit to London from which so much was expected, never took place—perhaps because his English Conservative friends were shortly afterwards turned out of office.

The threatened attack upon the Waddington administration took the form of a vote of want of confidence which was moved in the month of December, but successfully rejected. The Ministerial success, however, was of a somewhat fictitious nature, as the Left Groups when united, outnumbered the Right, and the Government was, therefore, liable to be turned out by a combination. M. Waddington himself professed satisfaction, and affirmed with pride that he had been congratulated upon his majority by the British Government; while from Berlin, Vienna, and even from St. Petersburg, where he was not in favour, assurances had been received of the satisfaction felt at the prospect of his continuing in office. The result, too, of the vote enabled him to carry out an intention he had long had in his mind, of abandoning the Presidency of the Council, and of retaining the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. His own wish was to see M. Léon Say Prime Minister, but as that was out of the question, he favoured the appointment of M. de Freycinet, who, in addition to other qualifications, possessed the confidence of Gambetta, and would therefore render it difficult for the latter to attack the Government. The proposed transformation of the Ministry, however, was found difficult to effect, chiefly owing to the animosity of Gambetta against

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Waddington; the former being credited with the intention of upsetting any Ministry in which the latter remained. Gambetta was in fact pursuing a systematic dog-in-the-manger policy which was little to his credit, for while continually attacking and threatening the Government he was unwilling to take office himself, with the Chamber then in existence, since he realized that the Ultra-Radicals were trying to force him into a position in which he would have either to accept responsibility or to abandon the leadership of the Republican Party. The object, in

[217] Offend.

short, of Clémenceau[218] and the extreme party was to use Gambetta up in order to make room eventually for themselves. Neither President Grévy or Freycinet showed any accommodating spirit with regard to Waddington's plans, and when Freycinet laid down conditions which were unacceptable, the President tried to persuade Waddington to remain on as Prime Minister; but Waddington's position had been further impaired by imprudent representation on the part of President Grévy and others, that he was highly acceptable to Bismarck as a Minister, and Waddington admitted openly himself that he was wanting in the qualifications of a French Parliamentary leader. Consequently the upshot of it all was that he resigned, and Freycinet was allowed to form a new administration on his own terms. "I part with Waddington with great regret," wrote Lord Lyons. "He had the greatest of all recommendations, that you could believe him, and feel sure of him." These regrets were shared by Lord Salisbury. "I am very sorry for the loss of Waddington. It was a luxury to have a French Minister who worked on principles intelligible to the English mind."

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Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Dec. 30, 1879.

> With the new Ministry I suppose Gambetta's reign is to begin. The Cabinet was almost ostensibly formed by him. He did not, and probably could not, put in any of the chief men of his own party. They are kept, or keep themselves, in reserve to come into power with Gambetta himself. The present Ministers are personally to a certain extent Moderate, and altogether, so far as they are known, mediocre. Freycinet is said to have some inclination to assert independence, but he has not hitherto rebelled against his old master Gambetta.
>
> The man who appears to have lost most reputation in the affair is President Grévy. He knows well enough that it is Gambetta's intention to supplant him, but he has allowed himself to be circumvented with his eyes open, from lack of resolution and lack of energy, and has apparently let his rival obtain complete control of the Government.
>
> I do not suppose that we shall see at present any marked change in the Foreign Policy of the French Government. Freycinet knows nothing whatever of Foreign Affairs. Gambetta has strong general notions, but seems more inclined to insist upon disposing of the patronage of the Foreign Office than to go into the details of the business. At home I suppose the first measure will be a wholesale redistribution of places. *Aux situations nouvelles, il faut des hommes nouveaux*,[219] was the principle proclaimed by Clémenceau. Beust[220] turns the phrase round and says: *Aux hommes nouveaux il faut des situations*.[221]
>
> At all events the centre Gauche is dead, and with it the Thiers' policy, which was to preserve as far as possible the institutions, the laws and the administrative system in

[218] Georges Benjamin Clemenceau (1841 – 1929) was a French statesman who was prime minister of France from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 until 1920. A physician turned journalist, he played a central role in the politics of the Third Republic, particularly at the end of the First World War.
[219] New situations require new men.
[220] Austrian Ambassador to Parish (LN) (See footnote on page 35)
[221] New men need situations.

France, with the simple change of having an elective President, instead of an hereditary sovereign at the head.

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The policy could not last long unless it was directed by a) really able energetic President. France is now about to try real democratic and republican government, and it will be a dangerous experiment in a country like this. It would be a still more dangerous experiment if the old warlike spirit had survived in the people. Happily for peace, they are more intent upon making and enjoying money than upon obtaining military glory, or even upon recovering their lost provinces. Gambetta will try for the recovery of the Provinces if he preserves his energies and fortune seems to give him a chance.

I have just seen Pothuau[222] who seems very indignant at his place in London having been offered to Waddington, and declares that he has no intention of giving it up.

Lord Lyons was destined to witness many more changes of Government in France before his final departure; most of them accurately described by the hackneyed phrase: *Plus cela change, plus c'est la même chose.*[223]

A letter from Major Baring written at the close of the year is worth quoting as evidence of the improved and hopeful condition of Egypt, and also of the harmony prevailing at the time between the English and French Controllers.

Major Baring to Lord Lyons.
Cairo, Dec. 29, 1879.

You may like to hear what I think of the state of things here, so I venture to write this line.

There is a very decided improvement. Since I have been connected with Egyptian affairs I never remember matters going so smoothly. I like what I see of the Khedive, and I see a great deal of him, for he frequently presides at the Council, and besides this I often go to see him on business. Riaz's[224] head is rather turned by the decorations he has received, but he is very well

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disposed and will always follow our advice, if we insist. He is oppressed with the fear that Nubar will return to office; as, without doubt, he will sooner or later; but it is not at all to be desired that he should return just yet. What we want is time. If we can get

[222] French Ambassador at London. (LN). Admiral Louis Pierre Alexis Pothuau (1815 – 1882) was a French naval officer and politician. He served as deputy for Paris, then as a *sénateur inamovible* (senator for life). He was twice Minister for the Navy and the Colonies and ended his career as France's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

[223] The more things change the more they stay the same.

[224] Riyad Pasha (1835 or 1836–1911) was an Egyptian statesman. He served as Prime Minister of Egypt three times during his career. His first term was between 21st September 1879 and 10th September 1881. His second term was from 9th June 1888 to 12th May 1891. His final term lasted from 17th January 1893 to 16th April 1894. He was awarded Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, which is the honour mentioned in the text.

along for six months, or better, a year, without any considerable change I really believe that the financial crisis which has now lasted so long may be brought to a close.

Cherif and the Turks made overtures to Nubar the other day, but he was wise enough to decline so unnatural a coalition.

Before long our financial scheme will be ready to launch, and if, as I hope, it is accepted, the Commission of Liquidation will no longer be necessary. This is perhaps the best solution of the matter.

We shall reduce Unified to 4 per cent, and leave Preference alone.

Blignières is behaving most loyally in everything which concerns English interests. The Khedive and his Ministers have, I think, got over the prejudice they entertained against him.

M. de Freycinet took over the Foreign Office as well as the Presidency of the Council; as has already been stated, he was quite ignorant of all foreign questions, and was also looked upon as less reliable than M. Waddington. The first official interview with him, however, produced a favourable impression, all the more because he did not let out a flood of common-places about devotion to England, and so forth; but the important question was to know what line Gambetta was inclined to take in Foreign Policy, and Sheffield was deputed to find out.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Jan. 17, 1880.

Gambetta has expressed confidentially to Sheffield to-day his views as to the Foreign

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Policy of France; with the intention of course that they should be communicated to me only in the strictest privacy.

He considered that the Austro-German Alliance had been made against France; that it entered into Prince Bismarck's calculations that it might throw France into the arms of Russia, but that His Highness thought that there would be more than a compensation for this if in consequence of it England were completely detached from France. Gambetta declared that France had not fallen into this trap and would not fall into it—that she would never make an alliance with Russia, but that if Russia were attacked by Germany, France would have to take care of her own safety. He had information which convinced him that there was no foundation for the assertions that Russian troops were being massed on the frontier of Germany, and he believed that these rumours were spread from Berlin to afford a pretext for an attack on Russia, to be made so suddenly as to be successful at once and to enable Germany to turn towards France without any fear of Russia in her rear.

In order to disconcert this plan Gambetta thought it highly important that a good understanding should be established between England and Russia both with regard to Turkey and to India. He held that it was the interest of France to urge in every way the Russian Government to come to such an understanding with England. He looked

upon the state of things at Constantinople as very bad, and attributed it to the disagreements between the French and English Ambassadors; while in order to promote the accord which he wished to see between England and Russia he desired that the best feeling should exist between the French and English Representatives at Constantinople. It was evident, however, from what he said that any complaint against Fournier by England would be met by counter-complaints on the part of France against Layard. If Fournier resigned, Tissot[225] the French Minister at Athens would be Gambetta's candidate for the Embassy in Turkey.

Gambetta denied most positively that there was any truth whatever in the rumours that

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he had been in communication with Bismarck about the restoration of Lorraine to France or anything of the kind. As to the insinuation that it was proposed that while Lorraine should be restored, France should receive a slice of Belgium in compensation for Alsace, Gambetta said that it was plain that this could only have been put about to produce ill-will between England and France. After the Benedetti affair, no Frenchman in his senses would enter into secret arrangements with Bismarck about Belgium, and the French Republic had certainly no desire under any circumstances to despoil its neighbours.

Gambetta expressed a desire that a liberal Treaty of Commerce should be made with England and he was eloquent on the importance of a close and cordial union between the two countries.

Gambetta impressed upon Sheffield that he was speaking to him simply as a friend, and quite privately. I think it is interesting and important to know what sentiments he expresses in this way: but, of course, if he was quoted, or if what he said was allowed to transpire, he would feel bitterly towards us and at once put an end to all communications of the kind. His tone appears to have been quite that of a man who felt that he would have the power to carry into effect the policy he recommended in this country.

Freycinet has just been to see me, but I did not find him equally communicative on the general Foreign Policy of France.

As Freycinet was occupied at that moment, *more Gallico*,[226] in clearing the old officials out of the Foreign Office, and as he admittedly possessed little knowledge himself, his reticence under the circumstances was not surprising; but, so far as could be gathered, it was the intention of the new Ministry to follow the prudent course of their predecessors, a profession of faith evidently intended especially for Berlin. As regards the so-called Eastern Question, interest had temporarily shifted from Egypt to Greece, and the

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various Powers were endeavouring without much success to negotiate the cession of Turkish territory to that country. The usual spring war scare had taken a different shape, and, without

[225] Charles-Joseph Tissot (1828 – 1884 also known as Charles Tissot) was a French diplomat and archaeologist, a pioneer in the exploration of ancient North Africa.
[226] In the Gallic manner.

any foundation whatever, Bismarck was credited with the extraordinary intention of suddenly falling upon Russia, while a coolness had sprung up between the French and Russian Governments owing to the refusal of the former to surrender the Nihilist Hartmann, who was implicated in an attempt to wreck a train in which the Russian Emperor was travelling.

This refusal annoyed the Emperor so much that he withdrew his Ambassador, Prince Orloff, from Paris, the French consoling themselves with the thought that if they lost the favour of the Russian Emperor they would, on the other hand, ingratiate themselves with Bismarck.

Upon the Greek Frontier question, which in consequence of an English proposal had been referred to an International Commission, there was, for some unknown reason, a disposition to blame the British Government.

Lord Lyons to Sir H. Layard.
Paris, March 19, 1880.

> The withdrawal of Orloff, on account of the refusal of the French Government to give up Hartmann,[227] is of course the topic of the day here. The form adopted is that which was used when normal relations between Russia and the Pope were suspended some years ago. The Emperor Alexander is, I understand, very angry; but I do not know how long this *mouvement d'humeur*[228] will hold out against the obvious political interest which both Russia and France have in not being on bad terms with each other. There was a strong feeling on the Left of the Chamber

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> against giving Hartmann up, and as to foreign relations, I suppose the French set pleasing Bismarck against displeasing the European Alexander.
>
> Freycinet is decidedly against the admission of Turkey to the Greek Frontier Commission. It might have been politic to admit her, though I don't see how she could have been asked to engage to be bound by the votes of the majority.
>
> I think things in the East are indeed looking serious. How Turkey is to be kept going, in spite of herself, much longer, passes my comprehension. I should be sorry to make a fourth in an alliance between France, Russia and Turkey. If France and Russia did unite for any serious purpose, I should think the last thing they would wish would be to tie such a clog as Turkey to their wheels. If there is any truth in the proverb, *Quem deus vult perdere si*,[229] etc., I am afraid that there can be very little doubt that the ruin of Abdul Hamid is in the hands of Allah.

[227] Frédéric Hartmann (1822 – 1880) was a French politician born in Munster, Haut-Rhin. He was elected representative of the Haut-Rhin on 8 February 1871 . He resigned in March 1871, in protest against the annexation of Alsace-Moselle. He settled in Paris and devoted himself to defending the interests of his compatriots until his death in 1880.
[228] Mood swing.
[229] Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REVIVAL OF FRANCE (1880-1881)

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The General Election in England which took place in March, 1880, resulted not only in the rout of the Conservative Party, but in the reversal of the Foreign Policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, and necessitated the withdrawal of Sir Henry Layard from Constantinople, while Lord Lytton, whose Afghan policy had been furiously denounced by the Liberal Party, sent in his resignation. It is worthy of note that Lord Lyons, whom no one could accuse of Jingo tendencies, and whose opinion was certainly a very much better one than that of most of Lord Lytton's critics, was emphatically in favour of the latter's Afghan policy. Writing to Lady Lytton on January 8, 1879, he had expressed himself as follows:—

> I have never had the least misgiving about Lytton's policy with regard to Afghanistan, and I was always sure it would be wisely carried into execution. I am only too thankful that we have a spirited Viceroy. You can hardly form an idea of the advantage our reputation has derived, all over Europe, from the Afghan campaign, and you have seen enough of diplomacy to know how much success in all questions of Foreign Policy depends upon the prestige of the country one represents.

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Sir Henry Layard had incurred even greater execration than Lord Lytton in the eyes of the Liberal Party, because he was considered to have been deeply committed to what was described as the Pro-Turkish policy of the Conservative Government, although his inexpiable offence seems to have consisted chiefly in strenuous and unavailing efforts to induce the Turks to put their house in order. During his stay at Constantinople he had been greatly hampered by the consistent opposition of his French colleague, M. Fournier, whose great object it appeared to be to thwart English action whenever opportunity occurred. The French Government, which professed great anxiety to act in harmony with England, upon ascertaining that Sir Henry Layard was to be replaced by Mr. Goschen,[230] withdrew Fournier and appointed M. Tissot in his place.

A change in the French Embassy in London was also imminent, and the circumstances attending the appointment of a new Ambassador were not devoid of humour.

Admiral Pothuau, the Ambassador under the Waddington *régime*, had been forced to retire, probably much against his inclination, and it was considered that M. Léon Say would make an excellent representative, more especially as he passed as that *rara avis*,[231] a French Free Trader; but M. Say shortly after accepting the appointment was elected President of the Senate, and therefore forced to resign. To find a satisfactory successor was apparently not so simple a matter as might have been assumed. Nothing could have been

[230] Subsequently Viscount Goschen (LN) George Joachim Goschen, 1st Viscount Goschen (1831 – 1907), was a British statesman and businessman. He was initially a Liberal, then a Liberal Unionist before joining the Conservative Party in 1893. While Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1888, he introduced the Goschen formula to allocate funding for Scotland and Ireland.
[231] Rare bird.

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more correct than M. de Freycinet's ideal of a French Ambassador in London: "a man possessing the full confidence and sharing the sentiments of his Government; not so much of a politician as to be thinking more of establishing his own political position at home than of following his instructions: a man who would stay long at the post, and desire to stay there; who would form personal friendships with English Statesmen, and improve good relations and soften asperities by personal influence. A man calculated to take a part in a society like that of London, and who would not be out of place at a Court—a man who would have a wife with the same qualities—finally, a man not unaccustomed to diplomatic business and diligent and accurate in transacting it." When, however, the question passed from the abstract to the concrete, M. de Freycinet's ideas ceased to flow so freely, and he seemed utterly at a loss to find the ideal being which his imagination had sketched, although he mentioned M. Challemel Lacour[232]—as a man who would not do. In spite, however, of M. Challemel Lacour being in M. de Freycinet's opinion a man "who would not do," it was evident that he had a powerful backing, for an emissary from the French Foreign Office shortly made his appearance at the Embassy and intimated in so many words that the appointment of M. Challemel Lacour would be agreeable to Gambetta. That no doubt was a considerable advantage, but M. Challemel Lacour by no means corresponded to M. de Freycinet's ideal representative, being a man of unconciliatory character and particularly notorious on account of a speech which he had once made, in which, alluding to political opponents, he had used the words "*Fusillez moi ces gens là!"*[233] an expression which was continually being

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quoted against him. In the meanwhile, however, M. de Freycinet had had an inspiration, and sent for Lord Lyons to tell him that he had discovered just the right man for the place. Unfortunately, this personage was married to a lady whose antecedents were not considered to be satisfactory, and it became necessary to intimate that under the circumstances the appointment would not be favourably received in England.

> "Freycinet was dreadfully put out," wrote Lord Lyons, "when he found that the appointment was impossible. He complained chiefly of Léon Say for having brought him into the difficulty, by first accepting the London Embassy and then standing for the Presidency of the Senate.
>
> "Léon Say's picture of the lady is about as much like what she was when I last saw her a few years ago, as Challemel Lacour is like Freycinet's ideal of a French Ambassador in London."

The appointment of M. Challemel Lacour was persisted in, and gave rise to some very disagreeable discussions in the House of Commons. Doubtless much of the abuse of M. Challemel Lacour was undeserved, but whatever his political capacity, he was not remarkable for urbanity.

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[232] Paul-Armand Challemel-Lacour (1827 – 1896) was a French statesman. During Léon Gambetta's lifetime, Challemel-Lacour was one of his warmest supporters, and he was for a time editor of Gambetta's organ, *La République Française*. In 1879 he was appointed French ambassador at Bern, and in 1880 was transferred to London; but he lacked the temperament of a successful diplomat. He resigned in 1882, and in February 1883 became minister of foreign affairs in the Jules Ferry cabinet, but retired in November of the same year.
[233] Shoot these people for me.

On the occasion of a big official dinner at the Paris Embassy, when requested to take in the absolutely unexceptionable and agreeable wife of one of his principal ministerial colleagues, he replied with an emphatic "*Jamais!*"[234] which precluded any further discussion.

The question of diplomatic appointments recalls the fact that it was about this time that my connection with

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Lord Lyons first began, through becoming a member of his staff, and that it may be appropriate to say something about his habits and personal characteristics.

Lord Lyons, who was then more than sixty years of age, was a big, heavily built man, whose appearance in no respect suggested the diplomatist of fiction, and who rather resembled the conventional British squire as depicted by Leech;[235] and the chief characteristic of his somewhat homely features was a small piercing eye which nothing seemed to escape, from the most unimportant clerical error to a minute detail in a lady's dress. As compared with the ordinary English diplomatist, his knowledge of foreign languages, without being exceptional, was thoroughly adequate. He, of course, spoke French with perfect facility, and it is probable that he wrote it with greater correctness than many Frenchmen, having a complete mastery both of the grammar and of all the complicated expressions which are made use of in correspondence. He was also equally at home in Italian; had a knowledge of German, and was well acquainted with modern Greek. In addition, he was a fair classical scholar, and a peculiarly retentive memory enabled him, unlike most people, to remember much of what he had read. His manner, at first sight, seemed somewhat alarming, and he was altogether a person with whom no one would have felt disposed to take a liberty, but the alarming impression, which was solely due to shyness, wore off with closer acquaintance as the natural kindliness of his disposition revealed itself, and one of the excellent traits in his character was, that he never formed a favourable or unfavourable opinion of any one in a hurry, but invariably waited for the test of time.

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The result was, in almost every case, that the more he saw of people the more he liked them and the more reluctant he became to part with men who had been associated with him for any length of time. The position which he occupied in British diplomacy during the twenty years which he spent at Paris may, without exaggeration be described as unique. No other man stood on quite the same footing, though it would be idle to deny that there were some who were perhaps more brilliant. But the implicit confidence which successive Foreign Secretaries placed in Lord Lyons's judgment was based upon the knowledge that his opinions were sound, unprejudiced, disinterested, and only formed after the most conscientious investigations. "I never volunteer advice," he used to remark, and it was perhaps for that very reason that his opinion was so frequently sought by the Foreign Office. In fact so much importance was attached to his views that he was occasionally asked to give his opinion upon subjects of which he had no knowledge whatever, ranging from the defence of Canada to the minimum dress allowance required by the wife of a British Ambassador at Paris. As he had no intention of seeking a consort himself, and as he had no intention, either, of resigning his

[234] Never!
[235] John Leech (1817 – 1864) was a British caricaturist and illustrator. He was best known for his work for *Punch*, a humorous magazine for a broad middle-class audience, combining verbal and graphic political satire with light social comedy.

post, the latter inquiry (which was made in 1870) appears somewhat superfluous; but, it may be worth noting, that as the result of conscientious researches, he reported that £1000 a year was considered to be necessary.

As to his merits as a chief, every one who had ever been associated with him was of the same opinion, and it was generally held at the Foreign Office that service under him at the Paris Embassy was a liberal education in itself. It may be doubted, however, whether his capacity and love of work were not to some

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extent a disadvantage to his subordinates, since his industry was so great that it left them comparatively little responsible work to do. At the Paris Embassy the ordinary routine work is probably greater than at any other Embassy with the exception of Constantinople, but there was scarcely anything, however trivial, which he did not attend to himself. It is believed in some quarters that an Ambassador leads a dignified, luxurious and comparatively unoccupied life, but that was emphatically not the case with Lord Lyons. He rose early and began the day by carefully studying the more serious French newspapers; the whole of the time up to luncheon was spent in writing or reading despatches, or attending to the various small questions which were continually occurring. In the afternoon, he worked again until about 3 or 4 p.m., and then usually went to see the French Foreign Minister or paid official calls in connection with current business. Upon his return he worked again until dinner unless interrupted by visitors, who were often of a tedious and uninteresting type, and it not infrequently happened that telegrams would arrive at a comparatively late hour of the night which it was necessary to deal with immediately. All correspondence which arrived at the Embassy, no matter from how insignificant a source, was attended to by him personally, and elaborate directions given with regard to the replies, which were invariably sent with the least possible delay. His industry was only equalled by an almost preternatural caution, which showed itself in a variety of ways. The reluctance to give advice has already been noticed, but his excessive caution showed itself not only

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in writing, but in conversation, and even amongst intimates he rarely expressed opinions on men or things which it would have been unsafe to quote in public, although his conversation was marked by much dry and original humour of that elusive character which cannot be described on paper. It was practically impossible to catch him napping. "The Juarez (Mexican Revolutionary) Minister having left his card upon me without any official designation, I have returned a card also without an official designation," he wrote from Washington in 1859. His reticence during the prolonged Trent crisis has already been commented upon. "I received by the last mail," he wrote to Sir Henry Elliot[236] in 1867, "a letter from Hussein Khan,[237] containing nothing but complimentary expressions. Not wishing to be outdone in civility, I have written a reply in the same strain. It has, however, occurred to me as just possible that Hussein Khan may desire to appear to be in correspondence with

[236] Sir Henry George Elliot (1817 – 1907) was a British diplomat. He was most noted for his period as ambassador at Constantinople and his participation in the 1876 – 77 Constantinople Conference. Elliot took a pro-Turkish line despite the "Bulgarian atrocities". As a result of the unpopularity in Britain of his pragmatism in the face of atrocities he was relocated to Vienna in 1877.
[237] The identity of this man is unclear. The fact that Queen Victoria talked to him on the subject of the Treaty of Berlin indicates that he was a high ranking official in the Ottoman Empire. There was a Tafazzul Hussain Khan (died 1868) who was a captain in the Indian Army but he would be too junior to be in contact with the Queen.

me for some particular object, and that there may be something which has occurred since I saw him, which might render it advisable that he should not be in correspondence with me. Accordingly I send my letter herewith open to you. If you see any reason, however slight, for not forwarding it, please destroy it, and take an opportunity of telling Hussein Khan that I asked you to thank him for his letter to me." It will be remembered that even Queen Victoria was unable to draw him successfully on the subject of the Treaty of Berlin. Similar instances might be quoted indefinitely, and as an illustration of his caution in private life it may be mentioned that he never stirred a yard outside the house

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without a passport. A man of this temperament was not likely to make mistakes, and it is a remarkable fact that throughout a correspondence extending over something like forty years, there is not to be found a single expression in any official communication addressed to him which could by any stretch of the imagination be described as a censure or even as a criticism of his proceedings.

As for the pleasures of the world, they hardly seemed to exist for him, but the ordinary human weaknesses, which were chiefly non-existent in his case, he regarded with an indulgent and even benevolent eye. He used to repeat with much glee that the chief entry upon his dossier at the Paris *Préfecture de Police* consisted of the words: *On ne lui connait pas de vice,*[238] and this concise statement may be said to have been literally true. He had never been in debt, never gambled, never quarrelled, never, as far as was known, ever been in love, although it was a mistake to suppose that the opposite sex possessed no attractions for him. Nor did he possess the resources available to the ordinary man, for he cared nothing for sport, had probably never played a game in his life, and detested exercise and outdoor life. The surprising thing was that he contrived to keep his health, as although a total abstainer, he was a large eater, and never took the slightest exercise. In fact, during the last five or six years of his life he probably never walked further than the English Church in the Rue d'Aguesseau, which was within a hundred yards of the Embassy. "Abstinence and exercise," he used to say, "were the only two things that disagreed with him."

The natural shyness of his disposition prevented him from deriving much real enjoyment from what is

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generally described as society, but all the social duties of an Ambassador were discharged in a manner which evoked universal approval. The entertainments at the Embassy consisted chiefly of dinners, which were remarkable for their excellence, and invitations to which were highly prized by all sections of French society. Nothing, in fact, could exceed the dignity or the faultless taste of the Embassy arrangements, and not only were Lord Lyons's entertainments renowned, but his horses and carriages were, even in Paris, noticeably amongst the very best, it being one of his strongest convictions that the British representative should always make an imposing appearance. But his hospitality was no matter of mere show; every night the unmarried secretaries were asked to dine with him unless otherwise engaged; and it was upon these occasions that he used to appear at his best; obviously finding more pleasure in their society than in that of any one else with the exception of his own relatives. Affection, indeed, for his relatives was one of his most marked characteristics, and

[238] He is not know to have any vice.

it is highly probable that his devotion to his sister, the Duchess of Norfolk,[239] and to her sons and daughters, was one of the causes of his not marrying; anyhow there was no further question of marrying after the failure of the determined attempt made upon him by an exalted personage, which has already been mentioned.

His temper was singularly equable, and during his long stay in Paris it was said that upon two occasions only was he known to have broken out; once, when at a review at Longchamps, the Diplomatic Corps were allotted an inferior position, and once upon an occasion when his coachman appeared wearing trousers

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instead of top boots and breeches. These ebullitions were due to the fact that he attached enormous importance to all the outward signs of official representation, and strongly resented anything which bore in any degree the nature of a slight. In his capacity as a private individual he was the most modest and unostentatious of men, and it is recorded, as an instance of his shyness, that he once passed a week at Woburn without ever leaving the precincts of the garden, because he was so much embarrassed by the salutations of an adjacent lodge keeper.

It might have been supposed that a man of this unimaginative and eminently judicial character would have failed to secure the regard of his subordinates, however highly he might be esteemed by Cabinets and Foreign Secretaries. As a matter of fact, probably no chief ever enjoyed greater popularity, which was due to a variety of causes. He was essentially a kind-hearted man, his correspondence abounds with instances of help given to persons who had been in his employment in any capacity, however humble; of opportune assistance rendered to other persons who had been unlucky in their public careers, and of recommendations of men whose services appeared to deserve recognition. And in spite of his apparently detached nature, he took the warmest interest in all those who were connected with him officially, and invariably showed the utmost consideration, not only for their feelings, but for their personal convenience. Thus, unlike some distinguished diplomatists, one of his great objects was to save his staff unnecessary work; he never put obstacles in the way of persons desiring leave, and every afternoon at the earliest possible moment, in order

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to release the Chancery, he used to send across the welcome written message: “I have nothing more for to-day,” although that by no means signified that his own labours were concluded. Hardworking himself, he expected his secretaries and attachés to do their share, and it was only when they conspicuously failed, that he showed any sign of severity. During his long career it fell to his lot to administer many reprimands, but these were invariably so just and unavoidable, that the culprits seldom, if ever, felt any sense of resentment, and he always made a point of obliterating as soon as possible, any disagreeable incident of this nature. The consequence was that he had no enemies, and no one who was ever associated with him, has, so far as is known, ever had anything but good to say of him. Another excellent feature in his character was that he always made the best of his subordinates instead of searching for their weak points; however unpromising the material, he generally succeeded in effecting a marked improvement, and whenever any one who had been with him left for another post, he

[239] Augusta Fitzalan-Howard, Duchess of Norfolk (née The Hon. Augusta Mary Minna Catherine Lyons, 1821 – 1886), was the younger daughter of Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons by his wife Augusta Louisa (née Rogers).

never failed to draw special attention to such good qualities as he appeared to possess with the view of assisting him in his future career. Perhaps I may be pardoned for interposing a personal testimonial, upon the occasion of a temporary transfer to Berne, which may serve as an example amongst many others.

Lord Lyons to Sir Francis Adams, [240] ***Minister at Berne***
Paris, May 15, 1883.

MY DEAR ADAMS

> I have settled that Legh is to be at Berne on the 28th, and I hope you will like him. He is clever and well informed, though some people think he does not look it.

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It need scarcely be added that many of the communications of this nature are of a more elaborate character, and refer to persons who now occupy distinguished positions in the British Diplomatic Service. As Lord Lyons grew older he became more and more reluctant to part with men whom he knew well, and it was pathetic to witness the obvious sorrow which he felt at their departure.

Paris has always been the most coveted post on the Continent, and in addition to the social attractions of the place, the Embassy enjoyed the reputation of carrying on its business in an efficient manner chiefly owing to the qualities of the Ambassador. The reputation was well deserved, and I can only recall one serious *lâche*,[241] not devoid, however, of humour, as to which I was unjustly alleged to be the culprit. At a moment when critical negotiations respecting intervention in Egypt were proceeding with the French Government, a member of the Embassy had an extremely confidential conversation with an important French Cabinet Minister, in the course of which the Minister criticized in very uncomplimentary terms his Ministerial colleagues, and the conversation was immediately embodied in a confidential despatch to the British Foreign Office. The following morning a much agitated Chef de Cabinet appeared at the Chancery, bearing the despatch, and announced that he "thought that some mistake had occurred, as the despatch had been received by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs." To the general consternation, it now became evident that the despatch, instead of being placed in the Foreign Office bag, had found its way into a lithographed envelope addressed to the *Ministre des Affaires Etrangères*, and the whole horrid mystery was laid bare.

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The question arose whether Lord Lyons should be told or not; the arguments of fear prevailed; the French Minister behaved in an honourable manner and kept silence, and Lord Lyons, fortunately for all concerned, never heard of an incident which he would have looked upon as little short of a calamity.

The only possible criticism that could be brought against Lord Lyons as an Ambassador would be that he led too narrow a life, and moved in too restricted a circle. Day after day and

[240] Sir Francis Ottiwell Adams (1825 – 1889) was a British diplomat who served in Japan and Switzerland. He served as Secretary of the British Legation in Japan from 1868 to 1872 and as British Ambassador in Switzerland from 1881 to 1888. As Ambassador in Switzerland, he was among the signatories of the Bern Convention of 1886.
[241] Act of negligence.

week after week he led the same existence; even his holidays were laid out on the same mechanical principle; every year he left his post, much about the same date, took the waters at some spa, and then proceeded on a round of visits in England, chiefly at the country houses of the governing families, such as Knowsley, Chatsworth, Woburn, and Hatfield,[242] but always including a prolonged stay with his relatives at Arundel. He was essentially a diplomatist of the old type, consorting entirely in Paris with the official classes, the Faubourg, and the Haute Finance; keeping the press at arm's length, avoiding everything which did not come within the scope of his duties, and confining himself strictly to his own business. The modern developments of diplomacy; the use of the press, the hasty missions of amateur diplomatists, the gushing speeches which are apparently now considered to be obligatory upon the professional diplomatist—all this would have been hateful and perhaps impossible to a man who could boast that he had spent five years in America without making a speech or taking a drink. But in an impartial survey of the twenty-eight years which Lord Lyons spent at Washington,

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Constantinople, and Paris, it would be rash to assert that any other man would, under similar circumstances, have retained to an equal extent the confidence of successive British Governments and the esteem and friendship of the long series of Foreign Ministers with whom he was called upon to negotiate questions often of the most vital importance.[243]

The main interest in foreign politics in the summer of 1880 lay in the Balkan Peninsula. Mr. Goschen had been sent out to Constantinople in the place of Sir Henry Layard, and Her Majesty's Government were endeavouring energetically to force the Porte to carry out the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin with regard to the rectification of the Montenegrin and Greek frontiers. The Greek Frontier Question made little way, and the Gladstone Government in their diplomatic campaign on behalf of the Greeks met with little encouragement or support from the other Powers, not even excepting France, who had always been the leading advocate of Greek claims. When M. de Freycinet was asked what he was prepared to do if the Turks resolved to defy the Conference which was then sitting, nothing more satisfactory could be got out of him than: *nous marcherons avec vous, or nous ne marcherons pas sans vous*,[244] and to the question whether he would go far if necessary, he only made the cryptic reply, *peut-être bien*.[245] The British Government were hankering after a naval demonstration, and it was disheartening to work with so pusillanimous a comrade.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 21, 1880.

In answer to your private and personal letter of the day before yesterday, I may say

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that I am not much afraid of the French not being willing to go as far as we are willing to go in coercing the Turks, if they set Europe at defiance about the Greek Frontier.

[242] The homes respectively of the Earl of Derby, The Duke of Devonshire, The Duke of Bedfordshire and the Marquess of Salisbury. Arundel Castle was a property of the Dukes of Norfolk whose eldest son holds the title of Earl of Arundel.
[243] See Appendix by Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, "Lord Lyons in Private Life."
[244] We will walk with you, but we will not walk without you
[245] Perhaps.

Freycinet seems to shrink from the idea that actual coercion may be required, but his only distinct limit to the action of France is that she will not do more than England.

I myself very much doubt whether the Turks will yield anything to naval or other demonstrations, unless they are quite sure that these demonstrations are the prelude to the actual use of force, and it will not be easy to get them to believe this, unless we are ourselves quite sure that that is what we mean.

Supposing we pushed demonstrations to the point of forcing the Dardanelles, and sending the allied fleets to Constantinople, we might produce a revolution, without obtaining the cession of the territory to Greece. If the populations are in parts really unwilling, the central government may be truly unable to compel them to give in.

Supposing the Greek troops (*par impossible*) be defeated either by the Turkish troops or by recalcitrant Albanians, the ships of the Powers might not be able to do much to get them out of the scrape.

I am very far from meaning to say, in answer to your question as to the mildest and safest form of coercion, that it would consist in moving troops to occupy the territory. To do so would be neither mild nor safe, nor easy to arrange. But I am afraid we shall find that in the end the treatment must be topical, and that if the Greeks cannot take possession for themselves, we shall hardly be able to obtain it for them by pressure exercised at Constantinople only.

A rendezvous of the fleets at Corfu might have a good effect on the Albanians, and perhaps increase the chance of the Greeks not being seriously resisted.

I see Goschen suggests that the decision of the Conference should be announced to the Porte by an identic note. I think a collective note would have more effect and be more appropriate.

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The Turks, however dense they may be in other respects, are usually intelligent enough to perceive whether the Powers are in earnest or not, and as no Government except the British felt much enthusiasm for either the Greek or the Montenegrin cause, they showed no signs of giving way.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 2, 1880.

I am afraid it does not look as if the Turks were going to yield to the moral force of United Europe. Léon Say and Montebello seem to hold even less resolute language to you than Freycinet does to me. Did the King of Greece[246] understand Gambetta to say

[246] The London Conference of 1832 had prohibited any of the Great Powers' ruling families from accepting the crown of Greece, and in any event, Queen Victoria was adamantly opposed to the idea. Nevertheless, the Greeks insisted on holding a referendum on the issue of the head of state in November 1862. Prince William of Denmark, the second son of Prince Christian of Denmark (the Danish heir-presumptive), was elected by the National Assembly to become King George I of the Hellenes. George I (1845 – 1913) was King of Greece from 30 March 1863 until his assassination on 18 March 1913. He was the direct paternal ancestor of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, consort of

> that France, with or without the co-operation of other Powers, would support Greece with troops? Freycinet will no doubt do whatever Gambetta tells him, but one of the inconveniences of the power behind the Government greater than the Government, is that Gambetta does not talk as cautiously as he would if he felt direct responsibility. No power except Russia seems to be willing to bell the cat. France seems to be the only one that has in abundance the three elements—men, ships, and money. Freycinet always says he will do anything with us, but nothing alone, and does not seem much more willing than Austria to look the chance of having to use force in the face.
>
> I do not see much prospect of an immediate diplomatic lull, and I very much want one because it is of importance to my health (at least the doctors say so) to get away, but I conclude that I ought not to shrink from going through the national Festival of the 14th July, and that I should do what is to be done at least as well as any of my colleagues.

Reviews, it may be said, were functions which he abhorred beyond all others.

The King of Greece was in Paris at the time, vainly trying to stir up Gambetta to come to his

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assistance, although Gambetta in conversation with Sheffield expressed strong opinions as to the desirability of France and England acting energetically in concert, and even professed himself in favour of their making a joint demonstration at Constantinople, and landing troops there if necessary. Upon the same occasion he betrayed his gross ignorance of English politics by lamenting that Lord Beaconsfield had not postponed the dissolution until the autumn, "when he would have been certain of success."

Freycinet, however, remained deaf to Lord Granville's appeals, even when the latter reproached him with the humiliating position in which France would be placed by abandoning a question which she had made her own, and when the British Government proposed a naval demonstration in favour of the Prince of Montenegro,[247] made all sorts of excuses for evading it if possible.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 13, 1880.

> I was more displeased than disappointed by the refusal of the French to join in the naval demonstration in favour of the Prince of Montenegro. They always try to act with Germany and have a horror of sending away a ship or a man unless Germany does the same: such is their confidence in the friendship they profess to believe in, that they want always to be ready at the shortest notice to attack their friend or to defend themselves from him. They are also, no doubt, jealous of any separate help to Montenegro which does not explicitly pledge the Powers to action in the Greek Question also.

Queen Elizabeth II. The family surname was Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg. Prince Philip adopted his mother's surname of Battenberg which was Anglicised to Mountbatten during the Great War.

[247] Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš (1841 – 1921) was the last monarch of Montenegro from 1860 to 1918, reigning as prince from 1860 to 1910 and as the country's first and only king from 1910 to 1918. His grandsons were kings Alexander I of Yugoslavia and Umberto II of Italy, among others.

> I quite agree with you that separate threats from the French to the Porte about Greece (however incorrect their acting separately may be) are more likely to do good than harm. One Power in

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> earnest would frighten the Porte more than the six, if the Porte were convinced that the five others would not restrain the energetic one.

During the next three months the Sultan, single handed, conducted a campaign against the six Great Powers, which, as will be seen, nearly ended in success; and it must, in fairness, be admitted that there was a good deal to be said from the Turkish point of view. The Powers were engaged in endeavouring to force the Porte to comply with conditions directly or indirectly resulting from the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. But no steps whatever were taken, or ever have been taken, to force other States to comply with stipulations which appeared to be disagreeable to them. The right of the Sultan, which had been secured to him under the Treaty, to occupy Eastern Roumelia, remained in reality an empty phrase: the Bulgarian fortresses which were to have been demolished, remained untouched, the tribute due from Bulgaria remained unpaid, and there was no indication of an intention to reinstate the unfortunate Mussulmans who, as the result of the war, had been driven away from their homes, and had been despoiled of their property by their new Christian masters. Neither could it be justly maintained that, in agreeing to a rectification of the Greek frontier at Berlin, the Turks had recognized the right of the Greeks to annex a territory equal in extent to half of the Greek Kingdom. Added to this, were the difficulty and the humiliation involved in surrendering against their will, a large number of Mussulman subjects. The difficulty had in fact proved insurmountable

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in the case of Montenegro, and the Albanians who were in the first instance allotted to Montenegro offered so successful a resistance that the original plan was abandoned, and after much negotiation, the Porte accepted “in principle” the cession of the Dulcigno district as an alternative. But the concession of anything “in principle” by the Turks, usually means something quite different from the usual interpretation of that expression, and the Sultan succeeded in organizing a highly successful so-called Albanian League, and ably supported by a resourceful local Pasha, contrived by various expedients to delay the surrender of Dulcigno for so long that it began to look as if it would never take place at all. Finally, the resources of diplomacy becoming exhausted, a policy of coercion was decided upon, and an international fleet assembled off the coast of Albania in the month of September, under the command of Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour.[248] Each power signed a declaration of disinterestedness and a pledge not to acquire territory, but the hollow nature of this imposing manifestation was betrayed by a provision that no troops were to be landed, and the Sultan, who probably had some inkling of the situation, still refused to give way. A bombardment of Dulcigno would presumably have left him philosophically indifferent.

As the Dulcigno demonstration did not appear likely to produce any satisfactory result, the British Government decided upon the hazardous step of proposing the seizure of Smyrna, that being considered the most efficacious means of coercing the Turks and of preventing the

[248] Afterwards Lord Alcester. (LN). Admiral Frederick Beauchamp Paget Seymour, 1st Baron Alcester (1821 – 1895) was a Royal Navy officer. He was commander of the Channel Squadron between 1874 and 1877 and was Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet from 1880 to 1883.

concert of the Great Powers from becoming the laughing stock of Europe. This step was evidently taken chiefly at the instigation of

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Mr. Gladstone, and the letters of Lord Granville bear witness to the extreme anxiety which he felt as to the result. No encouragement whatever was received from France; the timorous Freycinet having in the meanwhile been succeeded at the Foreign Office by the equally timorous Barthélemy St. Hilaire,[249] an aged survival of the Louis Philippe period.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Oct. 4, 1880.

> Barthélemy St. Hilaire's answer about the Greek Frontier does not look as if we should receive any energetic help from France towards obtaining the settlement of that or any other question in the East. The answer was all ready cut and dried, and the declaration as to France sticking to the Concert, but not taking any initiative, had been made before to my colleagues. A more experienced diplomatist would have acknowledged more elaborately your courtesy in offering to communicate first with France, before addressing the other cabinets on the Greek Frontier affair.
>
> The fact is that the present Cabinet is still more frightened than the last by the disapproval which has been manifested by all parties in France of even the little that has already been done. With regard to this, M. St. Hilaire made a remark to me yesterday which seems to be true enough. France, he said, has quite recovered her financial strength, and in great measure her military strength, but the moral of the people is not yet *relevé*.[250] They are horribly afraid of another war and consequently utterly averse from anything like a risky or energetic policy. Another popular sentiment, which is extremely inconvenient just now, is the feeling that France made the Crimean War *pour les beaux yeux de l'Angleterre*[251] and had better not repeat the experiment. Altogether I am afraid France will be a trouble, not a help to us, and I am a good deal put out about it.
>
> Barthélemy St. Hilaire talked to me a long time about Gambetta, with whom he

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> described himself as very intimate. He described Gambetta as having a naturally generous nature, as being somewhat impulsive and incautious, but at the same time somewhat "Genoese." He said that if I took opportunities of associating with him, I should find his character an interesting study. The study will not be a new one to me, and I am not sure that too apparent an intimacy between me and Gambetta would be viewed without jealousy.

[249] Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire (1805 – 1895) was a French philosopher, journalist, statesman, and possible illegitimate son of Napoleon I of France. Appointed senator for life in 1875, he took his place among the moderate republicans and from 23 September 1880 to 14 November 1881 was minister of foreign affairs in the cabinet of Jules Ferry.
[250] Raised.
[251] For the beautiful eyes of England.

M. Jules Ferry,[252] the new Prime Minister, was no more amenable than his colleague.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Oct. 8, 1880.

As to the French agreeing to the Smyrna proposal, I cannot prognosticate favourably. I had a long conversation yesterday with Jules Ferry, the Prime Minister. I seemed to make some impression by urging that to break up the European Concert now would be to keep the questions open, with all their inconveniences and all their dangers, for an indefinite time. He also admitted the many advantages of the Smyrna plan, and was quite unable to suggest any other course of action so likely to bring the Sultan to reason without inconvenient consequences. But he perpetually reverted to the argument that it would be going too near war to be admissible under the French Constitution, and that the Chambers on that account would call the Ministers severely to task. The argument from the Constitution seems to me almost absurd, but it is constantly used already in the press, and will no doubt be used hereafter in the Chambers. The fact is that Jules Ferry and his colleagues are horribly afraid of the effect which they believe any action on their part would produce on public opinion and on the Chamber.

I have seen B. St. Hilaire this afternoon. I went over with him the same ground I had gone over with Jules Ferry yesterday, but with much the same result. He told me that the question had been discussed in the Cabinet this morning and was to be discussed in another Cabinet to-morrow.

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Perhaps they would not like to stay out in the cold if Germany and Austria came in, but I am afraid they will certainly not say "yes," though they may say "no" before those Powers have given their answer. They seem to argue from the delay of the German Government, that Bismarck is against the proposal. Orloff, my Russian colleague, tells me that he is strongly urging the French to agree. Beust and Radowitz (the German) talk as if they themselves thought well of the Smyrna plan, but say they have heard nothing from their Governments.

I spoke to B. St. Hilaire about your reasons for communicating first with him about the Greek Question, and he sent with effusion the message of thanks which he ought to have sent at first.

Choiseul[253] is applying with vigour the *épuration*[254] system to the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service. He seems to have dismissed some very good men in both.

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[252] Jules François Camille Ferry (1832 – 1893) was a French statesman and republican philosopher. He was one of the leaders of the Moderate Republicans and served as Prime Minister of France from 1880 to 1881 and 1883 to 1885.

[253] Horace de Choiseul-Praslin (1837 – 1915) served as the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1880 to 1881 in the government of Jules Ferry. He was a moderate Republican (Centre-Left at the time) and sat in the Chamber of Deputies representing the Seine-et-Marne region. His father, Charles de Choiseul-Praslin, was at the centre of a massive scandal in 1847 (the murder of his wife) that helped topple the monarchy of Louis-Philippe. (*Google Gemini*)

[254] Purification.

> Des Michels[255] is one of his victims, and to-day he has decapitated the head of the Commercial Department.
>
> I think it better not to communicate at present the draft instructions to the Admiral. They would, I think, be seized upon as arguments that the occupation of Smyrna would be an act of war.

Her Majesty's Government were in effect in a very bad mess. The Smyrna proposal had received no real support from any Power. Bismarck had announced that the so-called Eastern Question was not worth the bones of a Pomeranian Grenadier, and nothing was to be expected from him. The same thing applied to Austria; neither Italy nor Russia were to be relied upon, and France was unwilling and unenterprising. No wonder that Lord Granville felt singularly uncomfortable: the Concert of Europe, as he expressed it, had "gone to the devil," no one was going to help him, and unless within a few days the Turks yielded, the British

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Government would be confronted with the alternatives of seizing Smyrna single handed or of confessing defeat and abandoning the contest. Lord Granville himself was in favour of the latter course, as being logical, and the natural consequence of the action of the other Powers, who would neither agree to the English proposals nor propose anything themselves. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, was apparently all for going on and acting as the mandatory of Europe, and as he usually got his way, it is possible that this dangerous course might have been adopted; but in the very nick of time, just at the moment when the situation looked to be at its worst, the Sultan suddenly gave way and announced that Dulcigno should be handed over to the Montenegrins. What brought about this sudden decision has always remained more or less of a mystery, but there is no proof that the proposed seizure of Smyrna (which would have probably inconvenienced European interests quite as much as the Sultan) was the deciding factor. According to the late Lord Goschen, who was in as good a position to know the real facts as any one else, the sudden surrender of the Sultan was caused by a Havas Agency telegram from Paris; but the contents of this communication have never been divulged, and Lord Goschen himself never ascertained what they were. The surrender of Dulcigno, which took place in November, terminated the crisis and enabled the Gladstone Government to claim a striking if lucky success for their own particular sample of spirited Foreign Policy.

In the year 1880 the relations between the Liberal Government and the Irish Nationalists were the reverse of cordial, and a good many inquiries used to come from the Foreign Office respecting alleged Irish plots and

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conspiracies at Paris with requests that the French police authorities should be asked to give their assistance. These requests Lord Lyons was in the habit of discouraging as much as possible, partly from an ingrained dislike to being involved in any secret and equivocal transactions, and partly because he knew that if the French police gave their assistance in

[255] Baron Abel des Michels (1833 – 1910) served as the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires étrangères*) during the first Jules Ferry ministry (1880–1881). Abel des Michels was a veteran diplomat who had served as the French Consul-General in Egypt. He was known for his firm stance against the Khedive Isma'il Pasha, often warning Paris that the Khedive was attempting to deceive European debt commissioners.

tracking down Irish conspirators, they would certainly expect reciprocity in regard to Bonapartists and other opponents of the existing system of Government at that time residing in England. For these reasons he always urged that the English police authorities should communicate direct with the French police authorities without using the Embassy as an intermediary. But the efforts of the Gladstone Government were not confined to endeavouring to check Irish plots by means of the police, and an attempt was made to restrain the turbulent bishops and priests engaged in the Home Rule agitation by applying pressure upon them from Rome. The credit of this expedient seems to have been chiefly due to the active and enterprising cleric, Monsignor Czacki,[256] who was acting as Nuncio at Paris, and who appears to have conceived the idea that if the Pope could be persuaded to intervene on the side of the British Government, it might be possible to re-establish regular diplomatic relations between England and the Papacy. As far back as December, 1879, Monsignor Czacki had made certain overtures, but they met with no attention from Lord Salisbury.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 18, 1880.

> Last October a very quiet, not to say dull, old Italian prelate was succeeded here as Papal

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> Nuncio by a very active, talkative and agreeable Pole, Monsignor Czacki.
>
> At the beginning of December Monsignor Czacki came to me and told me that he had received a letter from Ireland accompanied by, or referring to, letters from very important people, among which was, he said, one from you. He had in consequence written to the Pope, and the Pope had written to the Irish Bishops to exhort them to do all in their power to restrain their flocks from taking part in violent or seditious proceedings. Monsignor Czacki asked me whether the state of affairs in Ireland was at the moment so serious as to render it advisable that the Pope should repeat these exhortations to the Irish Bishops. I made a somewhat banal answer to the effect that though there were no grounds for feeling alarm as to the ultimate issue of what was going on, there was good reason that those who possessed influence there should use it for the prevention of crime and outrage, and also of turbulence and disorder.
>
> I reported what has passed in a private letter to Lord Salisbury, but I received no answer from him, and I heard no more of the matter till yesterday.
>
> Yesterday, however, Monsignor Czacki came to see me and showed me a letter he had received a few days before from Lord Emly.[257] The letter said that previous intervention had produced the best results, that several Bishops had denounced the agitation in the strongest terms, but that unfortunately the Socialists were publicly

[256] Count Włodzimierz Czacki (1834 – 1888) was a Polish prelate of the Catholic Church who spent his career in the Roman Curia. He was created a cardinal in 1882. Włodzimierz Czacki was born in Lutsk in the Volhynia governorate of the Russian Empire which today is in Ukraine. His family belonged to the nobility and he had the title count. He went to Rome at age 17 and, except for a few years as a diplomat in Paris, spent the rest of his life there. He served as Secretary to Pope Pius IX.

[257] William Monsell, 1st Baron Emly (1812 – 1894) was an Anglo-Irish landowner and Liberal politician. He held a number of ministerial positions between 1852 and 1873, notably as President of the Board of Health in 1857 and as Postmaster General between 1871 and 1873.

supported by various Bishops. It mentioned that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath,[258] and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel[259] had manifested their sympathy with Mr. Parnell, and that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore[260] had himself recommended Mr. Biggar[261] to the electors as a candidate. The letter begged Monsignor Czacki to intervene again, but it made the request only from Lord Emly himself, without any allusion to you or to any other person, as being cognizant of it.

Monsignor Czacki said that he entirely sympathized with the views of the writer and

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intended to send the letter to Rome; and he proceeded to ask me whether I would authorize him to say that he had shown it to me and that he sent it with my approval.

It seemed to me that this would be bringing the thing much too near Her Majesty's Government for it to be right for me to assent to it without knowing your wishes.

I confess this mode of communicating with the Vatican does not commend itself to my judgment, and that it seems to me that it might lead to awkwardness and interfere with better means you have of communicating with the Pope, if you wish to communicate with His Holiness at all. At the same time I was not absolutely sure that you might not think there might be some convenience in having this channel open. I did not therefore rebuff Monsignor Czacki, but without giving any hint that I should refer to you, said simply that I would think about what he had said.

He is very fond of enlarging academically upon the advantages England would derive from entering into regular diplomatic relations with the Holy See, or if that were impossible, from re-establishing an unofficial agent at Rome.

You will gather from all this that Monsignor Czacki is not altogether disinclined to be busy.

The energetic Nuncio returned to the subject at the close of the year.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Dec. 31, 1880.

You may remember that in June last I gave you in a private letter a long account of a conversation which Monsignor Czacki, the Papal Nuncio here, had volunteered to have with me on Irish affairs.

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[258] Most Rev. Thomas Nulty (1818 – 1898) served as Bishop of Meath from 1866 – 1898. Nulty was a significant figure in 19th-century Irish history, known primarily for his role as an agrarian reformer and his early support for the Land League. In 1880, he was a staunch ally of Charles Stewart Parnell.
[259] Thomas William Croke (1824 – 1902) served as Archbishop from 1875 until his death in 1902. Croke was a high-profile supporter of the Irish National Land League and a close associate of Charles Stewart Parnell. He had been the second Catholic Bishop of Auckland, New Zealand (1870 – 74)
[260] Nicholas Conaty (1820 – 1886) was Bishop of Kilmore from 1865 to 1886.
[261] Joseph Gillis Biggar (c. 1828 – 1890) was commonly known as Joe Biggar or J. G. Biggar. He was an Irish nationalist politician from Belfast. He served as an MP in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland as member of the Home Rule League and later Irish Parliamentary Party for Cavan from 1874 to 1885 and West Cavan from 1885 to his death in 1890.

Monsignor Czacki came to see me three days ago, and enlarged on the great advantage to the cause of order and tranquillity in Ireland it would be for the Pope to pronounce an authoritative

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condemnation of the wicked acts perpetrated in that country. He hinted that the Pope had been misled by some of the Irish Bishops who had recently been at Rome, and he dwelt on the inconvenience which arose from the British Government's having no channel of its own through which to communicate direct with His Holiness.

On the last occasion Monsignor Czacki offered to be himself a channel of communication. He did not repeat this offer, but his object in what he had said appeared to be to lead up again to the question of the establishment of regular diplomatic relations between England and the Vatican, or if that could not be immediately, then to the return to Rome of an unofficial agent, in the same position that was occupied by Odo Russell, and before him, by me. He told me he spoke entirely of his own accord, but that he was sure that Pope Leo XIII[262] would most willingly receive even an unofficial agent.

Monsignor Czacki is a very great talker, which makes it easy to say very little in answer to him, and I took full advantage of the facility for being conveniently silent which this afforded me.

The impression he left upon me was that for some reason or other the authorities at the Vatican decidedly wish to have some sort of agent there, from whom they could receive information respecting the views of the British Government upon the accuracy of which they could fully rely.

I don't think that if it had depended on me I should have discontinued the unofficial agent, awkward as the position had been made by the presence of the Italian Government and of a regular British Embassy. But to establish one now would be a question of far greater difficulty than to have kept one going.

Whether influenced by Monsignor Czacki or not, Her Majesty's Government sent Mr. Errington,[263] a Liberal Member of Parliament, to Rome in an ambiguous capacity which was loudly denounced in the House of

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Commons both by Home Rulers and by fervent Protestants, and in the course of one of the discussions on the subject, Mr. Gladstone informed an astonished audience that there was all the difference in the world between an Agent and an "Agente."

The French Municipal Elections which took place in January, 1881, produced a reassuring impression throughout the country, as both the extreme parties were decisively defeated, and the effect was largely to increase the power and influence of Gambetta, who was now in the

[262] Pope Leo XIII (Italian: Leone XIII; born Gioacchino Vincenzo Raffaele Luigi Pecci; 1810 – 1903) was head of the Catholic Church from 1878 until his death in 1903. He had the fourth-longest reign of any pope, behind those of St. Peter, Pius IX (his predecessor), and John Paul II.

[263] Sir George Errington, 1st Baronet (1839 – 1920) was an Irish Home Rule League politician. He was elected MP for Longford in 1874 and held the seat until it was abolished in 1885.

enviable position of being able to make or unmake Ministries, and who at the opening of the Chambers made a kind of "speech from the throne" which considerably perturbed the uninspiring President Grévy.

Everything that Gambetta now said was of importance, and his views on the European situation were ascertained in the usual manner through Sheffield.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Feb. 8, 1881.

> Gambetta asked Sheffield to breakfast on Saturday, and as usual talked freely to him.
>
> He appeared to think that the three Emperors had come to an understanding with each other, and that whatever might be their plans, it was certain that they would not be beneficial to French interests. According to him, it was with the Emperors not a question of the position of their Empires, but of their own individual positions. They were opposed to liberal views and liberal institutions. They were intent upon doing whatever would be most hurtful to the prestige and success of the Republic in France. They were, in fact, reconstituting the Holy Alliance.
>
> At this moment France was unfortunately powerless. Until the General Election had

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> taken place, her destinies must be at the mercy of any old women who were employed as stopgaps in ephemeral ministries. Since Barthélemy St. Hilaire had been in office he had only seen him once. He knew nothing or next to nothing of what went on at the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, and what little he did know, he disapproved. "*Que voulez vous*,"[264] he said: "nobody will do anything to commit himself in any way, pending the uncertainty of the elections."
>
> He seemed well informed about Egyptian affairs. He praised Malet and said de Ring[265] was entirely in the wrong in his quarrel with de Blignières, which was very injurious to the calm direction of Egyptian affairs. He expressed an intention to urge the immediate recall of de Ring.
>
> I mark this letter private because we should get into a great scrape and close a very convenient channel of communication if Gambetta found that he was quoted or that his sayings transpired in any way.

The interest of the year 1881 lies in the fact that it makes a fresh departure in French foreign policy and the abandonment of the retiring and timorous attitude which had prevailed ever since the war with Germany. The first State to experience the inconvenience of this new development was Tunis, and early in the year it became evident that a very acute Tunis question was imminent. The trouble began over a large property known as the Enfida Estate.[266] This property was sold to an important French financial association, but upon the

[264] What do you want?
[265] See footnote on page 182.
[266] The Enfida Estate Dispute began in late 1880 when Kheredine Pasha (the former Prime Minister of Tunis) decided to sell his vast "Enfida" estate, which covered approximately 100,000 hectares (nearly 400 square miles. A French company, the *Société Marseillaise*, purchased the estate for a large sum.

sale becoming known, a certain Mr. Levy, a Maltese British subject, put in a claim of pre-emption under Tunisian Law, and it was believed by the French that he had been instigated by the Italians, and was merely utilized by them as a convenient means of obstructing French enterprise. The dispute over the Enfida Estate rose to such proportions that a French ironclad, the *Friedland*, was sent to Tunis in February, and the British

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Government, who were bound to make a show of defending the interests of Mr. Levy, in spite of his dubious position, followed suit with *H.M.S. Thunderer*. Both vessels were soon withdrawn, but before long it was generally believed that a French invasion of the country was contemplated.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Feb. 25, 1881.

> The French public are getting very cross about Tunis. Reasonable people see that we cannot allow our own subject to be bullied, but the French in general do not distinguish between the Enfida case and the Tunisian questions regarding predominant influence, Italy, and so forth. Drummond Wolff's[267] question last night was very mischievous. It was his own party which gave the assurances at Berlin which have made Tunis so very delicate a matter between the French and us, and which dispose the French to allege that the present Government is less friendly to them about that country than the late. Anyhow, Tunis is the point on which above all others the French are susceptible and irritable; and the Italians, and, however unconsciously, our own Consul too, I am afraid, are always stirring up awkward questions on the spot. I should be heartily glad to be rid of the Enfida question in any creditable manner. I so strongly suspect that Levy is simply put forward by the Tunisians for their own gain, and supported by the local enemies of goodwill between France and England, in order to make mischief, that I only wish we could wash our hands of the whole affair. There seems to me to be no evidence that he is a bona fide purchaser on his own account. Tunis is the really ticklish point in our relations with France.

The Enfida Estate case was not only unsatisfactory on account of Mr Levy not being a very

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desirable *protégé*, but because it enabled the French to manufacture a grievance against the Bey, and gave the Italians an opportunity to encourage that unfortunate potentate in the belief that he would receive foreign support in the event of French aggression.

Joseph Levy owned a small piece of land bordering the Enfida estate. Under local Maliki (Islamic) law, a neighbour had the right of pre-emption (shufa), allowing them to block a sale and purchase the land themselves at the same price. Levy exercised this right to claim the entire estate, effectively blocking the French company's acquisition. He was backed by the British government, which saw this as a way to maintain British influence in Tunisia against growing French pressure. This led to the Treaty of Bardo in May 1881 which established Tunisia as French protectorate.

[267] Sir Henry Drummond Charles Wolff (1830 – 1908) was an English diplomat and Conservative Party politician, who started as a clerk in the Foreign Office. He was born in Malta, the son of Joseph Wolff and Lady Georgiana Mary Walpole, daughter of Horatio Walpole, 2nd Earl of Orford and thus the niece of Prime Minister Robert Walpole.

The intentions of the French Government were disclosed before long. Shortly after the wretched Bey had protested against a memorial containing a long list of alleged French grievances against the Government of Tunis, M. Jules Ferry, on the ever convenient plea of the necessity of chastising hostile frontier tribes, asked for votes of credit for both the army and the navy, which were unanimously agreed to. Before the expedition actually started, the French agent at Tunis, M. Roustan,[268] visited the Bey and informed him that the French preparations were intended to protect him against the Sultan of Turkey, who desired to convert Tunis into a Turkish Pashalic, and that, under these circumstances, it was very desirable that Tunis should be placed under a French Protectorate. It was quite in vain that the unhappy Bey urged that he had no reason to suspect the Sultan of any such intention and that he had not the slightest desire for a French Protectorate; he was informed that he was not the best judge of his own interest, and that French troops would shortly enter his country to chastise the Kroumirs,[269] a race of whom nobody had yet heard, but who apparently constituted a serious menace to the French Republic.

The obvious design of the French drew from Lord Granville an opinion that they could not be allowed to seize upon Tunis without the consent of Turkey, and the permission of other Powers; but to this opinion not much attention seems to have been paid.

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Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
April 5, 1881.

> I have thought it necessary to instruct you to inquire into the state of affairs at Tunis. You are not likely to do so in an unnecessarily offensive manner.
>
> I am told that the French are determined to establish their Protectorate. This will be very awkward at the moment.
> Pray look as mysterious as you can, as to what might be our attitude.
>
> We do not wish to follow the example of the foolish opposition made to Algiers, but the French cannot be allowed to seize Tunis without the consent of Turkey and communication with the rest of Europe.
>
> The Italians wish us to move vigorously in the matter; the Italian Government seems alarmed at the excitement of their chamber.

It was all very well to say that the "French cannot be allowed to seize Tunis," but when a big European Power decides to pounce upon a weak and decaying Oriental State, it is not of the slightest use to employ such language if merely moral suasion is contemplated. The recent action of the Italian Government with regard to Tripoli[270] was the exact repetition of French action with regard to Tunis, and remonstrances were of no more avail in one case than in the other. The Bey sent piteous protests and appeals for justice to all the Great Powers, but as

[268] Theodore Roustan (1833 – 1906) was a diplomat and civil servant of the French colonial administration. He began his career in Beirut and Smyrna before being transferred successively to Cairo, Alexandria, Damascus and Palestine before being becoming consul in Alexandria, Consul General in Beirut and finally Consul General in Tunis,

[269] The Kroumirie is a mountainous region located in northwestern Tunisia and northeastern Algeria. The region is named after its people, the Khumayr.

[270] 1911 (LN.)

Italy, the only Power which really objected, was not prepared to fight, his lamentations fell upon deaf ears. Meanwhile, in an attempt to justify their bare-faced aggression, the French Government apparently handed to M. Blowitz, the *Times* correspondent at Paris, a despatch from Lord Salisbury written

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in 1878, which it had been agreed should be treated as confidential, and it was intimated in the press that further private and confidential communications would appear in a forthcoming Yellow Book.[271] This produced a very justifiable remonstrance from Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Hatfield, April 24, 1881.

> I am not sure that I am not irregular in addressing to you any communication on public affairs. But I think I have been told that a certain license is accorded to disembodied Foreign Secretaries, of haunting the scenes of their former misdeeds.
>
> My cause of writing is this. My eye caught a statement in one or two English papers that St. Hilaire intended to print in the forthcoming Yellow Book, Waddington's first despatch to d'Harcourt on coming back from Berlin. I had a dim recollection that it was undiplomatically phrased and had been withdrawn: but I could remember no more.
>
> Is it not rather a strong measure for a Government to withdraw a despatch to which objection is taken at the time, when it might be answered, and then to publish it three years later, when the materials for answering it no longer exist? However, perhaps I am wrong in assuming that the newspaper report is correct.

Lord Salisbury was quite correct in his recollection, and the intention of publishing the despatch referred to was not carried out, but various attempts were made to fix upon him the responsibility for French action in Tunis.

Lord Granville, although he confessed to disliking the process, had to content himself with ineffectual barking.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
April 22, 1881.

> You will not like a despatch I send you, and I am rather sorry to send it. But I do not see how we are to give France *carte blanche*.

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> I dislike barking without biting, but if the result of not barking (in contradistinction to all that was done under Louis Philippe and Napoleon, when English remonstrances certainly stopped the French) is the annexation of Tunis, or the creation of the great

[271] In a formal government context, "Yellow Books" (or *Livres Jaunes*) were actually the traditional colour for official diplomatic documents in France. The British government used officially "Blue Books" for their parliamentary reports and statistics, they would often refer to the "Yellow Books" of other nations such as France in diplomatic correspondence. (*Google Gemini*)

port of Bizerta impregnable by naval force and neutralizing Malta, we should look rather foolish.

Notwithstanding the present Chauvinism about Tunis, it would not be a sweetmeat for the French to have England, Italy and the Arabs inside and outside Algeria against her.

It is as well that she should not imagine that this is perfectly impossible.

But, of course, I wish to ruffle her as little as possible, and nobody will wrap up the warning of our doctrine as to the Ottoman Empire better than you will.

Undeterred by Lord Granville's just remonstrances and equally undeterred by the Sultan's assertion of his suzerainty claims, the French entered Tunis and occupied the capital on May 11, after little more than a mere promenade. On the following day the Treaty of the Bardo, which practically established a French Protectorate over the country, was extorted from the Bey, and declarations by the French Government made it clear that no intervention, direct or indirect, would be tolerated.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 13, 1881.

Barthélemy St. Hilaire certainly foreshadowed the Tunisian Treaty accurately when he said that it would very much resemble a Protectorate. It is so like one that it would be difficult to point out a difference. The guaranteeing the execution of the Treaties of the European Powers is sufficiently impertinent. As in all these French expeditions, there is a vast amount of dirty

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pecuniary stock-jobbing interests at the bottom, which have been the real motive power.

The whole affair is of very bad augury. It will inspire the French Public with a love of resorting to high-handed proceedings which can be indulged in without any real risk. Gambetta said to Dilke that his Cherbourg speech was the first glass of wine given to the Convalescent France, good for her but somewhat startling to her system. This Tunis expedition is the second. The patient has swallowed it so complacently that she may soon wish for another, and perhaps a stronger stimulant. They got Bismarck's leave for this, and it will perhaps be a long time before they do anything of the kind without his leave. But then he will be sure to push them on to any undertakings which will occupy their minds and their forces, and tend to put them on bad terms with other Powers. And this is disquieting, for there are not wanting all over the globe places and questions in which the French might make themselves very inconvenient and disagreeable to us, and might, if encouraged by Bismarck, come at last to a downright quarrel with us.

Add to this the state of feeling in the English manufacturing districts which is likely to be produced by the Commercial proceedings of the French, and their virulent Protectionism, and the prospect looks gloomy enough.

The actual proceedings of the French in Tunis were in reality of less importance as regards England than the spirit which they betrayed, for their reception by the French public indicated a state of feeling which might have dangerous consequences. The preparations for the expedition were not considered by impartial critics as particularly creditable to the skill or efficiency of the French military administration, and there had been nothing like serious fighting in the short campaign. The question had simply been one of bullying a

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defenceless ruler, and of carrying on a high-handed policy in the face of Europe. Nevertheless the whole affair was hailed with almost unanimous delight by the French people. Nor, apparently, was this delight diminished by the reflection that the expedition had not been undertaken without the approval and encouragement of the German Government, and that the favour had been acknowledged with almost humiliating gratitude.

Gambetta had represented that his object was to emancipate France from the humiliation of having to consult Bismarck confidentially beforehand upon every step she took, but this humiliating precaution was certainly not neglected in the case of Tunis, and if there had been the slightest suspicion that the expedition would have involved France in any difficulty with Germany, public opinion would at once have declared against it. From the German point of view this was satisfactory enough, but scarcely reassuring as far as other Powers were concerned.

The French had shown that they rejoiced in any high-handed proceedings which did not bring them into collision with Germany, and whilst it was not improbable that their rulers would seek popularity by gratifying this feeling, it seemed not unlikely that the policy pursued by Germany with regard to the Tunis expedition would be persevered in. To disseminate the forces of France and to divert the minds of the French from Alsace and Lorraine by encouraging them to undertake distant enterprises for the gratification of their vanity, was an obvious means of increasing the safety of Germany, and the more such enterprises tended to alienate from France the sympathies of other Powers, the more they would contribute to the

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security of Germany. Unfortunately there were scattered over the globe, numerous islands and other territories, the annexation of which by France might be prejudicial to English material interests or objectionable to English feeling; and there were, moreover, various countries in which the undue extension of French influence might be dangerous to England, and where France, if tempted or encouraged to resort to arbitrary proceedings, might, without deliberately intending it, become involved in a downright quarrel with England. These considerations made it desirable that especial caution should be exercised in the case of Egypt. The effect of the Tunis expedition upon Egypt had been twofold. On the one hand, it increased Egyptian suspicions of the insincerity and rapacity of European Powers; on the other hand, it increased the reputation of France in Egypt at the expense of the other Powers and of England in particular, and diminished any confidence in being effectively protected from French encroachments. The lesson of the Tunis expedition was obvious; it would clearly be folly, either by withholding the tribute or by any other step to weaken the connection of Egypt with the Porte, for the French Government had taken elaborate pains to show that in dealing with Tunis it was dealing with an independent Power. This contention had naturally been resisted by the Porte, and there was little difficulty in proving that suzerainty had been effectually established by a Firman of 1871. But the Sultan of Turkey,

who in the past had enjoyed the possession of more suzerainties than any other potentate, had seldom derived anything but embarrassment from this

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particular attribute, and in the case of Tunis it proved to be singularly inconvenient. Encountering no opposition from other Powers, the French flouted the claims of Abdul Hamid, and in order to signify their new position, announced that the French representative would thenceforth take charge of all foreign questions. In spite, however, of the flexibility of the European conscience with regard to the general principle of the Sultan's suzerainty, it was recognized that under certain circumstances that principle must be conscientiously upheld; and it was, therefore, intimated, more or less directly to the French Government, that although the Sultan's suzerainty in Tunis was a negligible quantity, the situation in Tripoli was quite different, and so, in a far greater degree, was that of Egypt.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 17, 1881.

> It is most true that the danger of bad relations between us and the French arises from their proceedings not ours, and that this makes the great difficulty in meeting it.
>
> The change of their position with regard to Bismarck is another great difficulty. A little while ago dread of Germany made them unwilling to send a regiment or a ship to a distance from France, but since the Tunis affair, they have gone into the trap he has set for them with their eyes open. They feel sure of his support and encouragement in any distant enterprises, and the surer of it in proportion to the hostility which such enterprises may provoke in England and Italy. They thus find a cheap way of gratifying their vanity, and of advancing some of their apparent interests. This coquetting with Bismarck does, moreover, divert their thoughts from Alsace and Lorraine.
>
> I don't think it would be prudent to make any special advances to Gambetta at this moment. We might not please him and we should very probably offend Grévy and Barthélémy St. Hilaire,

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> and so interfere with the practical treatment of present questions, such as the Commercial Treaty, the West Coast of Africa, Newfoundland, etc.
>
> The anomalous position of the French in Tunis, and the proceedings of Roustan[272] there, will keep up irritation in England and Italy—and I suppose the French, *annuente*[273] Bismarck, will cut the Gordian knot, sooner or later, by annexing it. They ought in consequence to acquiesce in some improvement of the position of England in Egypt, but this is dangerous ground.

The overbearing attitude of the French officials in Tunis caused considerable irritation in England, and something akin to exasperation in Italy. The Italians, had they felt strong enough to do so, would have resisted the French pretensions by force, but being without an

[272] French Consul-General at Tunis. (LN) (*See footnote on page 240*)
[273] Person in agreement.

ally at the time, had to content themselves with violent ebullitions in the press. The ill-feeling between the two countries was marked by serious riots at Marseilles and other towns in the South of France.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 24, 1881.

> I did my best to impress upon B. St. Hilaire yesterday that there was real bitterness of feeling among the public in England, and that if the French Government and its agents persisted in a series of irritating measures, the consequences might be very inconvenient. The French had got all they could want, I said, and I could not help wondering that it did not strike them that their policy should now be to let the new system settle down quietly, to avoid occasions of controversy about it, and in short, to let Tunis be as little heard of as possible at present. It was an ill return, I observed, for the great patience and friendliness shown by our Government, to be perpetually springing upon them surprises unpalatable to English public opinion. He professed to *abonder dans mon sens*.[274] I entreated him to keep his subordinates in order.

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> The French seem to have an unpleasant business in Western Algeria, and there is beginning to be an outcry against the military and civil management of the troubles there.
>
> Good feeling between French and Italians will not be promoted by late events at Marseilles. The feelings of the French towards the Italians there are like those of the American workman towards the Chinese at San Francisco, or of the Irish towards the negroes at New York. There are said to be more than 50,000 Italians at Marseilles, and they are apt to use their knives.
>
> There are symptoms of a growing antagonism between Jules Ferry and Gambetta, signs of the feeling between the Elysée and the Palais Bourbon.

After all, the Tunis expedition turned out to be a rather more troublesome affair than had appeared probable at first. At the end of June insurrections broke out at Sfax and other places, necessitating the recall of French troops who had been sent back to France; bombardments, and other severe measures of repression. The insurrection spread into Algiers on the western side, and on the eastern side the disturbances created the possibility of a violation of the frontier of Tripoli by the French troops.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 5, 1881.

> Retribution has come quickly upon the French for their hypocritical seizure of Tunis. The Arabs seem to be upon them in all directions. Although this serves them right, it is, I think, much to be regretted for political reasons, independently of the suffering it causes to un-offending Europeans of various nationalities in Africa.
>
> If the French have to send a large force to Tunis, they will very probably, formally as

[274] Agree with me.

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> well as virtually, annex the Regency. Tripoli will then stand exactly in the same relation to them that Tunis did before the assumption of the Protectorate. After Tripoli would come Egypt; but happily there is, I believe, a very impracticable desert tract between them.
>
> How great must be the complacency of those who desire to occupy French troops in distant countries, and to involve France in difficulties with other Powers.

If the action of the French in seizing Tunis was hypocritical, the contention that the case of Tripoli stood on an entirely different footing was equally unconvincing. The real truth, of course, was that, with the exception of the Italians, no one really objected to the French going to Tunis. They went there, under distinctly false professions, announcing that the expedition was intended solely to punish refractory tribes, and that the occupation was merely temporary. The disclosure of their real objects naturally caused irritation in England as well as in Italy, but all hostile criticism was met by the assertion of the Liberal Government that Lord Salisbury had himself invited the French to take Tunis at the time of the Berlin Congress. The French themselves were careful to represent that they had only followed Lord Salisbury's advice, and Lord Granville, in defence of his own policy, always maintained that the phrase attributed to Lord Salisbury, Carthage *ne doit pas rester aux barbares*,[275] had cut the ground from beneath his feet, and rendered remonstrance useless. But to make Lord Salisbury responsible for this act of flagrant immorality seems, in the face of such evidence as is available, unjustifiable. All that he had done was to intimate that he had heard that the French were extremely anxious to go to Tunis; that if they did so, British interests would not

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be endangered, and that he should consequently look on with indifference. When M. Waddington, in 1878, construed this opinion as an invitation to France to appropriate Tunis, Lord Salisbury felt bound to remonstrate, and he wrote to Lord Lyons, as has been already shown. "He (Waddington) makes me talk of Tunis and Carthage as if they had been my own personal property, and I was making him a liberal wedding present." The real instigator of the Tunis expedition was not Lord Salisbury, but Bismarck. The latter, who was omnipotent in Europe at the time, could have stopped French action at any moment he pleased, but instead of doing so, he naturally encouraged an enterprise which was certain to lead eventually to difficulties between France, Italy, and England.

While, however, it was convenient to overlook any French illegality with reference to Tunis and to its connection with the Turkish Empire, it would have been, as has already been shown, manifestly imprudent to allow Tripoli, which stood in a precisely similar position, to be menaced with a similar fate: besides which, Italy had already marked Tripoli down as her own prey. Accordingly the French Government were informed that "in view of the unquestioned incorporation of Tripoli in the Turkish Empire, as well as its proximity to Egypt, Her Majesty's Government could not regard interference of whatever description on the part of the French Government in that province in the same manner as they viewed the recent occurrences at Tunis. That Her Majesty's Government should take this view of the question of Tripoli cannot, they feel

[275] Must not remain with the barbarians.

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assured, be a source of surprise to that of France, since they have, on all occasions when the question of the extension of French influence in the direction of Egypt has been under discussion, been perfectly frank in their explanations with the French Government on the subject." In his reply to this communication, M. B. St. Hilaire (who had previously announced that to annex Tunis would be a great mistake), effusively stated that the French Government looked upon Tripoli as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, over which it did not pretend to exercise a predominant or exclusive influence, and gave a formal denial to all rumours which attributed to France any designs upon that country. The British Government professed itself quite satisfied with these assurances, and the Porte, for once in a way, showed sufficient intelligence to make its suzerainty quite clear, by despatching troops to garrison the country, and by other precautionary measures. In consequence of these steps Tripoli remained immune from attack for another thirty-two years, and when, in 1912, the Italians, following the French example of 1881, fell suddenly upon it without any serious attempt at justification, they did not allege that they were attacking a semi or wholly-independent State, but declared war upon Turkey itself, and incidentally brought about the destruction of Turkish power in Europe. The future of Tripoli under Italian rule is still obscure, while the numerous prophecies of failure which attended the seizure of Tunis by the French have not been fulfilled, but in either case it would be difficult to justify the morality of the enterprise or to defend the policy of these two Great Christian Powers.

The year 1881 witnessed the renewal of negotiations for a new Commercial Treaty between France and England,

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and in consequence of opinions expressed by M. Tirard,[276] the French Minister of Commerce, it was determined to take the negotiations out of the hands of diplomatists. M. Tirard had declared that he believed that an understanding could be effected if the question could be freed from diplomatic dilatoriness, and that if he were brought face to face with a "competent and well-disposed man," the whole matter would be settled within a week by making a few mutual concessions. To meet these views, the late Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., was appointed principal British Commissioner with the late Sir Joseph Crowe, Sir Alfred Bateman,[277] and other distinguished experts as his colleagues or assistants, but M. Tirard's prognostication turned out to be entirely incorrect. In spite of the great ability and indefatigable industry of Sir Charles Dilke and the other British Commissioners, the negotiations made a very unsatisfactory start, were constantly broken off, and were not even concluded by the end of the year, so that it must have been impressed upon M. Tirard that dilatoriness was not necessarily due to diplomacy. From the first, the negotiations were unpromising, for Free Trade had continually receded in France since the Empire, and the necessity of cultivating good political relations with England was evidently less in 1881 than it had been upon the last occasion.

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[276] Pierre Emmanuel Tirard (1827 – 1893) was a French politician, who served twice as Prime Minister during the Third Republic. He was for a short time president of the customs commission before his appointment as minister of agriculture and commerce in March 1879 in the Waddington cabinet. He held the same portfolio in the first Freycinet ministry (1879 – 1880) and in the Jules Ferry cabinet (1880 – 1881). He was minister of commerce in Freycinet's second cabinet (1882), minister of finance under E. Duclerc (1882 – 1883), and under A. Fallières (1883), retaining the same office in the second Jules Ferry ministry (1883–1885).

[277] Sir Alfred Edmund Bateman (1844 – 1929) was a British Statistician, sometime president of the Royal Statistical Society.

The representatives of the two nations met in London in June, and an inauspicious beginning was made by the French Commissioners repudiating the bases signed in 1880 by Lord Granville and M. Léon Say. By the middle of the month the breaking off of the negotiations was already being considered.

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Lord Lyons to Sir C. Dilke, M.P.
Paris, June 14, 1881.

I received last evening your letter of the day before, asking me whether I had anything to say on the policy of breaking off the commercial negotiations when you get to work.

I don't think we should lose sight of the fact that there will in all probability be a thorough change of Government in France in the autumn. We might perhaps get a decent treaty from the new Government if they found the negotiations in progress. It might not be so easy to get negotiations reopened if they had once been broken off, and the French had become accustomed to the idea of having the general tariff applied to British goods.

Politically, it would, I think, be a great pity to begin ill with the new Government, and I don't think we could possibly begin well, in the state of feeling which would be produced in this country, and still more I suppose in England, by a commercial rupture.

The majority of the French would be very glad that the general tariff, or still higher duties, should be enforced against English goods, but they would none the less be irritated by our breaking with them.

I confess, too, that I am alarmed, perhaps without sufficient reason, at the effect which may be produced both at home and abroad by the cry in England for retaliation.

My own plan would be, for the present, to pursue the negotiation as seriously and as steadily as is compatible with not committing ourselves to any decidedly objectionable duties so definitely as to be hampered in subsequent negotiations if we find the new Government more fairly disposed towards us.

If there was ever any possibility of concluding a Treaty in time for it to be passed by the Chambers this Session, there is certainly none now. Gambetta wanted to get the question out of

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the way before the elections; but even if the Treaty were signed, I don't think the Chambers could be induced to consider it under present circumstances. Nor would they, I should think, pass a bill to prolong the existing Treaties.

To my mind, our most prudent course would be to let the new Chambers find the negotiations going on when they meet in the autumn. I don't of course mean that you should go on sitting every week from this time to the autumn: it would suffice that there should not be any adjournment sine die, and that we should not give any ground

for an assertion that we are not really willing to conclude even a moderately fair treaty.

Lord Lyons, as has already been stated, was, like almost every British official of the time, a firm and almost bigoted Free Trader; and it is possible that his alarm at the prospect of retaliation was caused by the appearance of the Fair Trade League; that harbinger of Tariff Reform to which somewhat inadequate justice has been rendered by its imitators. But it is surprising to learn of these qualms, when he is found predicting that the smaller countries who were willing and able to retaliate on French goods, would obtain better terms than England. The very different spirit in which the smaller States approached commercial questions with France is shown in the following instructive account of the views of the Swiss Minister at Paris, M. Kern.[278]

Lord Lyons to Sir C. Dilke.
Paris, June 25, 1881.

Last evening, after my letter to you of yesterday had gone, I met Kern, who told me that in the course of the day he had had an interview with M. Tirard, and also one with M. Gambetta. He had, he said, declared most distinctly to both, first, that Switzerland would not sign a Treaty

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placing her in a less advantageous commercial position than that now existing; and secondly, that if the general tariff were applied to Swiss goods, French goods would be forthwith subjected to duties of precisely the same amount in Switzerland. He had, he said, somewhat surprised M. Tirard by informing him that the Swiss Government had power to impose such duties at once, without waiting for legislative sanction.

The impression left upon Kern's mind by the two interviews was, that as hard a bargain as possible would be driven by France, but that in the end they would rather make moderate treaties than no treaties at all, if they saw that this was the only alternative.

He is going to Berne to confer with his Government, and he says that he is sure they will approve and confirm his language to Tirard and Gambetta.

After these interviews, Kern was very positive that the French Government were making a great fight to justify themselves to the Chambers, but that if the Powers, and particularly England, were firm, the French would yield rather than incur the political and other inconveniences of not making any treaty at all.

I am not so sure as he seemed to be of this, but I think that the French are alive to the political inconveniences of breaking with England altogether; and it might therefore be worthy of your consideration, whether, when you go back to the Articles you reserved in the Tariff, you should not make a last effort to see whether the French cannot be brought to consent to a Treaty which would be better commercially than no

[278] Johann Konrad Kern (1808 – 1888) was a Swiss lawyer and national councillor from the canton of Thurgau. He later served as a Swiss diplomat in Vienna and Paris (there as a "minister", it corresponded to then "envoy ") and is considered the founder of Swiss professional diplomacy.

> Tariff Treaty at all. It might interfere with whatever chance of success such an effort might have, for the French to feel beforehand that they could get out of the political difficulty by signing a simple Most Favoured Nation Treaty.
>
> Nevertheless I am not shaken in my opinion that it would be advisable for you to sign a Most Favoured Nation Treaty, if better may not be, before you break up the Commission, or adjourn it for any long time.
>
> Commercially we had better make sure at once of sharing the concessions which may be made to other Powers under threats of retaliation.

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> Politically we should, I think, find it most disadvantageous to have even the appearance of being on bad terms with France.

The British Government apparently still entertained the illusion that there were real French Free Traders. M. Challemel Lacour was the chief French Commissioner and Lord Granville welcomed him as a brother Free Trader. His brother Free Trader said it was true that he was *Libre-Echangiste*, but he was *Libre-Echangiste Français*,[279] and recognized the necessity of paying due consideration to the interests of native industries. To this chilling response, Lord Granville was forced to retort that he must venture to doubt whether a *Libre-Echangiste Français*, in His Excellency's acceptation of the term, was not what in England was called a Protectionist. M. Waddington had once stated that he was a Free Trader "bar cotton," and whenever the French Radical Parliamentary candidates, who were then perambulating the country in view of an approaching general election, were asked whether they were Free Traders or not, they replied in the affirmative, but qualified by a reserve in favour of French industries which would be ruined by Free Trade. As a matter of fact, the spirit of Protection was becoming more and more ingrained in the French people, and the best chance of getting a reasonable Commercial Treaty lay in the hope that an election would bring Gambetta into power.

The London negotiations which had been temporarily suspended were resumed at Paris in the autumn, and continued during the remainder of the year; but interest was diverted from commercial matters to the events which were occurring in Egypt and their probable effect upon Anglo-French relations

[279] A French Free Trader.

CHAPTER XV

ARABI'S REBELLION. (1881-1882)

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In September, 1881, the long-drawn-out Egyptian crisis culminated in the military coup d'état of Arabi and the colonels, which resulted in the dismissal of the Ministry and the practical establishment in Egypt of a military dictatorship. From that moment European intervention, in some form, became inevitable, and it was the object of the British Government to continue to adhere honestly and consistently to the policy of working in conjunction with France, and to avoid carefully as long as possible any action which might necessitate the employment of force.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Sept. 30, 1881.

The article in the Times has produced an anti-English explosion on the subject of Egypt, and was certainly well calculated to do so.

For my part, I think the best thing to be done is to take an opportunity of distinctly manifesting at Cairo the continuance of the Anglo-French understanding.

If we let either the Egyptians or Foreign Powers suppose they can upset that, we shall not be able to maintain the English and French Controllers, and if they disappear, the

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financial prosperity will disappear with them, and we shall have the bondholders, French and English, on our backs again.

If we let in other Foreign Powers, and at the same time try to establish English predominance, we shall have those Powers coalescing with France against us.

A split with us would very probably lead to France throwing herself into the arms of Bismarck, and he would encourage all her ambitious aims out of Europe, and, in particular, those the prosecution of which would widen the breach between her and England: or, in other words, be especially annoying and inconvenient to us.

I hope things are so far calming down in Egypt, that we may not be called upon to take any special measures this time; and the best hope of avoiding them in future seems to be in making it understood that England and France united will resist attempts to overthrow the existing system.

I am all against letting the Turks thrust the smallest finger into the pie. At this moment the French would never consent, and would consider our bringing in the Turks a specially unfriendly act, with a view to their Tunisian affairs. The less they merit any consideration from us, the more sore they will be at not receiving it. Besides which, where the Turkish hoof has trod, no grass grows, and woe to the finances of any country with which the Turk can meddle. Of course, in what I have said about Egypt I have confined myself to the present and the immediate future.

The chances of being able to avoid active intervention were in reality non-existent; for temporizing measures taken in conjunction with France could not put off for ever the day when, moral pressure having been found insufficient, armed force would necessarily have to be employed. When that day arrived, the probability was that France would want to send troops in conjunction with ours, and our consent to that

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course might involve us in war with France in a very short time. If we had the courage to tell the French that our interests were paramount in Egypt, and that therefore all other European Powers must be kept out, then we must be prepared to back our words with force, and everything therefore pointed to the naval superiority of England in the Mediterranean as being our paramount necessity. With real naval superiority in the Mediterranean we were practically able to make the French do our bidding, if we chose. We had the power to shut up their navy in French ports, to stop their communications with Africa, to render powerless two millions of French soldiers, and to demolish Bismarck's schemes of elbowing us out of the Mediterranean. Such was the happy position which we enjoyed in 1881, and it was a great contrast to that which we occupy at the present day; but it did not tend towards promoting goodwill between the two nations, and Lord Lyons constantly urged that some joint understanding should be arrived at, in the event of another military outbreak in Egypt. The situation had been complicated by the despatch of a Turkish mission, and the general impression in France was that Arabi and the colonels would shortly be engaged in a conspiracy to dethrone the Khedive and to restore something like the old *régime* in the country. A positive declaration from the English and French Governments that they would not tolerate the overthrow of the Khedive and the established system might have effected much if it was felt that the two Governments would interfere by force, if necessary, rather than permit it; but this would not be felt or believed unless the two Governments had really

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come to an understanding and had agreed upon details; and when it came to discussing details the question at once presented difficulties. These difficulties were not lessened by a French Ministerial crisis in the autumn, as a crisis usually produced a fit of petty Chauvinism, such an encouragement to Consuls in the East to *porter haut le drapeau de la France*,[280] the bullying of local authorities, and a demand for the extortion of monopolies and concessions for French speculators.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 4, 1881.

> The Treaty of Commerce and Egypt will probably be the two first questions we shall have to discuss with the new Government.
>
> The Commercial negotiations seem to me to have been brought exactly to the right point. Having obtained the three months prolongation, we have resumed the negotiation on the day fixed, and have continued it bona fide; and it now stands over in a manner which will enable us to see in due time whether or no we can make a treaty with the new Government.

[280] Carry high the flag of France.

As regards Egypt, the opinion gains ground here that at the bottom of the agitation there is (or soon will be) a plot to dethrone Tewfik and put Halim[281] in his place as a 'National': i.e. anti-European, anti-French, and anti-English Control, Khedive. I understand that de Blignières represented strongly to Gambetta that the only way to produce quiet in Egypt and counteract intrigues in favour of Halim at Yildiz Kiosk is for England and France to declare positively at Cairo and Constantinople that they will not stand it, but will resolutely support Tewfik and the existing state of things. I do not know how far Gambetta assented to this, but I am told he did not dissent from it.

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The result of much political manœuvring was that in November, 1881, Gambetta was forced to take office and to exchange the irresponsible power which he had hitherto wielded in the background for Ministerial responsibility. As frequently occurs in similar cases, when the great mystery man was dragged out into the light of open day, his appearance was somewhat disappointing. His Administration, with one exception only, was composed entirely of men belonging to his own immediate following, and contained no one of any weight beside himself. Gambetta took the Foreign Office as well as the Presidency of the Council, and on the principle that *il vaut toujours mieux avoir affaire à Dieu qu'à ses anges*,[282] this was an advantage, although it was believed that he entertained so great an admiration for Bismarck, that, following the latter's example, he would probably hand over the foreign diplomatist to an under secretary. The first impressions produced by the new Ministry were not favourable.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 18, 1881.

I don't think the present Ministry is so far at all a success. Among other inconveniences arising from the appointment of men of so little personal importance is that there is no one in Gambetta's party who does not think that he ought to have been a Minister; or, in other words, who acquiesces in the superiority of any of those chosen. The fact that Léon Say and Freycinet were offered portfolios, but would not accept them on Gambetta's terms, tells against the selection ultimately made. Gambetta's personal genius must make up for all deficiencies. He appears to have a talent in particular for parliamentary tactics, especially for making the right move on the spur of the moment. I doubt his having deep-matured plans. So far as I can see, he lives *au jour le jour*[283] like ordinary men.

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I had a long visit yesterday from Spüller, but we did not get much beyond generalities. Gambetta and I have exchanged visits, but have not met.

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[281] Mehmed Said Halim Pasha (18 or 28 January 1865 or 19 February 1864 – 6 December 1921) served as the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1917. He is said to be one of the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide and later assassinated by Arshavir Shirakian, an agent of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, as part of Operation Nemesis, a retribution campaign to kill genocidiers. It is unsure if he was actually involved, as he did not hold much political power and was kept in the dark on most matters of state by members of the Central Committee of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress.

[282] It is always better to deal with God than with his angels.

[283] Day by day.

> I do not hazard conjectures on commercial matters, as Dilke will ascertain to-morrow exactly how the land lies. As a diplomatist, I cannot but feel that there is convenience in being a bachelor just now.

The last sentence does not refer to the fact that he had just been created a Viscount, but to the somewhat peculiar domestic circumstances attaching to certain members of the new Government.

It had been assumed that Gambetta's accession to office would be marked by a more vigorous foreign policy, especially in the direction of acquiring fresh territories in distant regions; but this was not justified by his own language or bearing, and at his first interview with the Ambassador he abstained from pompous common-places about preferring England to all the rest of the world, and desiring peace at any price, which was looked upon as a good sign. At the same time, there was, in his speeches about Tunis and the Mediterranean, a slight flavour of Chauvinism which would not have excited remark before 1870, but which would not have appeared in 1880, and would certainly not have been applauded in 1881, unless it had become generally known that Bismarck had sanctioned and encouraged French enterprises away from the continent of Europe.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 6, 1881.

> Gambetta gave the Diplomatic Body an excellent dinner last Saturday, and played his part as host very successfully.

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> What may be at the bottom of his heart, nothing has yet shown.
>
> The change which has come over the relations between France and Germany opens to him the door for a comparatively safe yet ambitious Foreign Policy. Will he resist the temptation?
>
> During the years which immediately followed the war, the feeling of France towards Germany was composed of furious hatred and of mortal dread. The line taken, consciously or unconsciously, by Germany tended to add bitterness to this feeling. She interfered dictatorially with France even in internal matters. Her object seemed to be not only to impede the restoration of French strength and wealth, but to prevent the French recovering even prestige anywhere. She was, or affected to be, convinced that a war of revenge on the part of France was imminent. She was believed by the French to be angry at their showing so much vitality and to be preparing to give them the coup de grâce.
>
> At this moment, however, neither France nor Germany appears to apprehend an attack or to be prepared to make one. Each appears to consider the other too strong to be attacked with impunity. Certainly Gambetta would not find the nation in heart to follow him in defying Germany. If therefore his policy or his passions incline him to do something striking to flatter the national vanity, how is he to find the means? The Tunis affair has given Bismarck an opportunity of showing him. It has enabled the Chancellor to convince the French that they will have the countenance of Germany in any enterprise in which they may engage out of Europe.

> How far this may be part of a great plan of Bismarck's to secure German supremacy in Europe by pushing Austria into the Levant, Russia into Asia, and France into Africa and the Mediterranean, and by shutting up England in her own islands, we need not inquire. In any case it must suit Prince Bismarck to see France making acquisitions of territory or influence, which weaken her military force in Europe, throw burthens on her finances, and make ill blood between her and other Powers.

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> Unhappily if Gambetta is so short-sighted as to give in to temptation of this kind, difficult questions are, more than with any other Power, likely to arise with England, who is in contact with France all over the world and especially in the Mediterranean.
>
> I hope better things, and I am not at all willing to despair of a thorough good understanding between France and England which would avert danger from both, and enable both to do good to all the world. Still one cannot but be anxious at this moment. Egypt may be the ticklish point.

The Parliamentary skill of Gambetta was seen to advantage during the short winter session, and compared favourably with the want of tact and vigour which had been displayed by his predecessors. He even obtained a success in the Senate, where he had not expected to find any sympathy at all, and some of the more sensible Conservatives became disposed to support him, more from fear of what might result if he fell than from personal attachment. Some of his appointments, however, aroused alarm, and he perturbed Lord Lyons by bestowing upon a journalist a most important post in the Foreign Office.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 30, 1881.

> I will not despair, but I am feeling very great anxiety about the Commercial Treaty. I am afraid that on this side of the Channel, much more than in England, the failure of the negotiations would have a most undesirable political effect. In France and on the Continent generally, it would be taken as a sure indication of a coolness between the two Governments. Gambetta would be taunted by the Opposition with having alienated England (Italy having been alienated before). Gambetta's supporters in the press and elsewhere would try to throw the blame upon

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> England, the English press would retort upon France, and a very unpleasant state of feeling would be the result.
>
> Gambetta has astounded people by appointing a flashy newspaper writer, of no particular principles, to the post of Political Director in the Foreign Office. The Political Director is almost the most important person in the office, as he drafts all the political despatches and notes. I hope the communications to the foreign ambassadors are not to be in the style of "smart" newspaper articles. I confess that when I saw the appointment in the *Journal Officiel*, it did not occur to me that the man could be the same Weiss who had been writing in the *Figaro*.

The friendly disposition of Gambetta towards England has already been noted, and beyond a certain tendency in his speeches towards Chauvinism, there was nothing in his conduct

calculated to arouse alarm, but nevertheless a critical moment in Anglo-French relations appeared to be approaching at the beginning of 1882. The Government of France had passed into the hands of a Minister far more influential, more able, and more ambitious than any man who had taken part in public affairs since the retirement of Thiers, and the time was at hand when that Minister must decide on the line of policy to be followed with regard to Foreign Powers. The character and temperament of Gambetta naturally disposed him to endeavour to make his Foreign Policy more vigorous, more successful and more striking than that of his predecessors, and with that object he would probably take one of two courses. Either he would aim at emancipating France from her existing confidential servility towards Germany; or, despairing of that, he would continue the existing relations with Bismarck, and thus ensure the latter's willing acquiescence in aggressive proceedings on the part of France beyond the limits of Europe.

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In order to shake off the German yoke, Gambetta evidently considered it essential that he should be able to place himself on distinctly friendly and intimate terms with England, and if he failed in this, the probability was that he would be obliged to revert to the patronage which was felt to be so irksome. But the change which had come over the relations between France and Germany opened the door to a foreign policy which was comparatively safe and easy, and yet did not present the disadvantage of being unambitious. The period which immediately followed the war of 1870, was, as has already been pointed out, marked by a feeling in France towards Germany of fierce hatred combined with extreme fear, and German policy, whether consciously or unconsciously, tended to embitter this feeling. Germany interfered dictatorially and ostentatiously even in French internal affairs, and the object seemed to be not only to crush the reviving strength of France, but to prevent her recovering anywhere, or in any matter, the smallest portion of her lost prestige. The German Government professed to believe that a war of revenge was meditated, and was credited with the intention of finally destroying France before the latter should be sufficiently recuperated to resume the struggle.

But with the lapse of time, a change of policy, and, to a certain extent, a change of feeling had taken place on both sides. Neither country was in any immediate apprehension of an attack from the other. A somewhat ostentatious interchange of courtesy had been substituted for their former reserve, and Bismarck had seized the opportunity of the invasion of Tunis to let the French understand

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that they would have the countenance of Germany in enterprises undertaken by them out of Europe. Apart from all far-reaching schemes for securing German supremacy in Europe, it was obviously in the interests of Germany that France should engage in enterprises and make acquisitions which dispersed her armies, disorganized her finances and created ill feeling with other Powers.

Gambetta was much too intelligent a man not to see through this policy, but the temptation to direct the energies of France into the Colonial, rather than the continental direction, might prove too strong for him if he despaired of gaining credit for his Government in another way. Unhappily, in such a case, with no Power were difficulties so likely to arise as with England, which was more or less in contact with France in all parts of the world, and especially in the Mediterranean. Nor could it be forgotten that in the speeches lately delivered on the subject

of Tunis, Gambetta had made strong appeals to national pride with regard to French possessions and interests beyond the seas.

Still there was no reason to suppose that the so-called Colonial Policy was Gambetta's first choice. He was known to chafe under the practical subservience of France to Germany, and to feel deeply humiliated by it. At the bottom of his heart he cherished an ardent desire to recover the lost provinces, but he knew that neither the military strength of France nor the spirit of the people would warrant his attempting this within any assignable period. He did, however, aim at freeing the French Government from the sort of occult

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control which Germany had recently exercised over it, and at improving the position of France as a Great Power. He desired to present the Government over which he presided to France and to Europe as taking a dignified and important part in international questions, and feeling that these objects could best be attained by a real and visible friendship with England, he was evidently disposed to treat pending questions with a view to maintaining and manifesting a cordial understanding.

The two most important questions of the moment were, of course, Egypt and the Commercial Treaty.

As regards Egypt, there was so far complete unity between the two Governments—the strain having not yet arrived—but the conclusion of a Commercial Treaty appeared to be a more arduous affair. Gambetta was apparently ready to go as far towards making an acceptable Treaty as was possible without risking a defeat in the Chambers. But if the negotiations were to fail, he would probably despair of keeping up good feeling towards England in France. He would conceive that the failure would discredit him in the eyes of France and of Europe; that it would convey to foreign Governments an impression, which he could not remove, of there being a coolness between France and England, and that it would oblige him to seek for his Foreign Policy some other basis than union with England.

Perhaps the fear that unsuccessful commercial negotiations would convert Gambetta into a foe was partly due to a communication from Sir Charles Dilke announcing that a commercial ultimatum was about to be hurled at the French Government. This communication is extremely instructive from the English

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Parliamentary point of view, for it recommended that in despatches the word "bargain" should be carefully avoided, "as it would strengthen the reciprocity argument." In other words, although wine duties were to be utilized for the purpose of bargaining, the fact was not to be disclosed lest it might be construed as a departure from the sacred principles of Free Trade.

Attention was, however, quickly diverted from the Commercial Treaty to Egypt. On January 8, the British and French Governments presented the so-called Dual Note, in which they declared their intention of "warding off by their united efforts all causes of external or internal complications, which might menace the régime established in Egypt." The Dual Note was by no means as successful as had been hoped, and it is clear that Gambetta was in favour of more decided and independent action than the British Cabinet. Within a few days Lord Granville was already writing to Lord Lyons and asking him whether it would not be

advisable for England and France to ask permission from the Powers to appear as mandatories of Europe.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Jan. 17, 1882.

> The news from Egypt is certainly not reassuring, and the *mauvais quart d'heure*[284] may arrive at any moment.
>
> M. Gambetta would probably desire joint intervention; the objections to this are immense: I need not recapitulate them all to you.
>
> Single occupation, by England or by France, still more so.
>
> I am not quite sure that Turkish occupation under proper conditions and control by France and England, although a great evil, would not be less bad than the three alternatives I have mentioned.

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> But it is not only bad in itself, but it would be strongly opposed by the French, although it would be supported by the German Powers. In these circumstances, an observation of Malet's struck me as having some force. Talking of the intentions of some of the other Powers to have their part in the question, he said it would not be so objectionable, if they consented to allow the English and French to be the mandatories.
>
> The idea seemed to me to be worth considering, and I spoke to Tenterden and Rivers Wilson (but to no one else) and requested them to draw up a memorandum as to how this could be carried out. I send you an extract, and I should like to have your opinion on it before I submit it even to Gladstone as a possibility.
>
> Gambetta of course would not like it. But his difficulty is as great as ours if he were to understand that we will not agree to joint occupation. There would be nothing humiliating to France if the proposal was freely consented to by both countries and jointly offered to Egypt.
>
> For us it would only be acting on the Concert of Europe principle, about which we have been making such a fuss.

This somewhat half-hearted proposal met with no approval from Lord Lyons, who expressed his objections in more decisive terms than were usual with him.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 19, 1882.

> In your letter of the day before yesterday you ask me for my opinion on a suggestion as to admitting other Powers to take part in the Egyptian Question, on the supposition that France and England should be their mandatories.

[284] Bad quarter of an hour.

This would, *ipso facto*,[285] be the abandonment of the exceptional position which England and France have taken up in Egypt. Whether this position can be, or ought to be, maintained for a long time, is a question which I will not stop to examine.

That a proposal to abandon it, at this moment, would have a very bad effect on our relations

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with France, does not, I think, admit of a doubt. It would be taken as an abandonment of our intention to give up, in the face of Europe, all special intimacy with the French Government. It would give rise to suspicions that we were trying to use the other Powers for the purpose of ousting France from Egypt. The union of England and France on the Egyptian Question is the principal symbol of there being a good understanding between them, and to this symbol the French attach no little importance.

I don't know that the designation of mandatories of Europe would mend the matter. The other Powers would not commission England and France to decide by themselves what measures should be recommended for Egypt. They might depute England and France to enforce the decisions of Europe, but this would only bring us back to the joint intervention of the two Powers in a particularly awkward and unmanageable form.

Practically, it would, I think, be found much more difficult for us to keep well with France, if the other Powers were also to have a voice in details. Hitherto England and France have managed to come to an agreement with each other on the questions that have arisen. It might be made more difficult for them invariably to side with each other against other Powers. Political considerations as to affairs distinct from Egypt might come into play. Setting aside a natural and not improper jealousy on the part of each, lest its associate should obtain separate and undue influence, the interests of England and France in Egypt are very much the same. The main interest of some Governments, and in particular that of the Porte, might be antagonistic to cordiality between the two Western Powers.

A Commission appointed now to deal with questions relating to the government and administration of Egypt would be a different matter from the Commissions of 1878 and 1880.

In the first place, it seems probable that the Sultan would protest strongly against it, and that he would do so whether or no there were Turkish members of it appointed by him. His Majesty might possibly acquiesce under strong pressure from all the Powers, but would all the Powers

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put such pressure on him? In all matters bearing upon the relations between the Porte and Egypt, it must, I am afraid, be taken into consideration that neither France singly, nor England singly, nor the two acting together, are likely at the present time to exercise predominant influence at Constantinople; and that, on the other hand, the

[285] By the fact itself.

Power which does exercise predominant influence there shows no disposition to jeopardize that influence by giving unpalatable advice, and is not supposed to have any desire to promote cordiality between England and France.

Moreover, we have to consider not only the Sultan and the Khedive, but the mutinous officers and the so-called National Party in Egypt. From a telegram which Gambetta showed me yesterday, it would appear that Arabi had expressed some idea of appealing against England and France to the Great Powers collectively. But would he and his party, whose watchword seems to be "Egypt for the Egyptians," submit passively to the installation of a Foreign Commission to settle all the important national questions? Would they acquiesce in the subsequent enforcement of the decision of the Commission?

The Commission might certainly sit at Alexandria, and it might perhaps have the support afforded by the presence of an Anglo-French squadron, or an International squadron. In either case, would the squadron be provided with men to be landed in case of need, and would the Commission be authorized to call for the assistance and protection of a force to be put on shore? If this were so, it might be merely a small beginning which might ultimately render intervention in arms on a larger scale inevitable.

On the other hand, if the presence of the squadron were to be merely a naval demonstration, would the fact of its being more or less representative of all the Great Powers give it much more weight than if it were made on behalf of England and France alone? Would it, in either case, be safe to trust to the moral effect of its being sufficient, and to its not rendering further action imperative?

Gambetta seems to hope that firm and decided language, used collectively now by France and

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England, may ward off a crisis. If there be any chance of warding off a necessity for action, it no doubt lies in this; but I suppose that with Gambetta the wish is father to the thought. On the one hand, in face of the present unpopularity of the Tunis expedition, it would be very awkward for him to have to send another French force to Africa at the present moment. But, on the other hand, he could not confront the mass of enraged bondholders if he abandoned their interests; and public opinion here, which is very sensitive about Egypt, would not tolerate his letting France be openly set at naught in that country.

It is needless to add that the French Government would bitterly resent it, if any hint were given to a third Power, without their having been previously consulted, if there is any idea on our part of withdrawing from our separate understanding with them, and merging Egypt in the general Eastern Question. If they were ever brought to consent to calling in the other Powers, they would not readily forgive having their hands forced in the matter.

For my own part, I would certainly, as regards Egypt, rather have to deal with France only than with four or five more Powers.

There can be no shadow of doubt that Lord Lyons's view was the correct one, but Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone (no other member of the Cabinet is mentioned) seem to have hankered after the Concert of Europe, probably in consequence of the stroke of luck at Dulcigno.[286]

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons
January 21, 1882

> Your very powerful letter has gone to Gladstone. It is not easy to find an answer to all your arguments. The question is whether there are not stronger arguments against any other course. I think it is likely that I shall write to you to ask you to speak to Gambetta.

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> On the imminence of the crisis: the importance of perfect union between England and France: our strong objection to intervene alone—giving as reasons:—opposition of Egyptians; of Turkey; jealousy of Europe; responsibility of governing a country of Orientals without adequate means and under adverse circumstances; presumption that France would object as much to our sole occupation as we should object to theirs.
>
> Have carefully considered joint occupation; some of the objections to sole occupation lessened, but others most seriously aggravated.
>
> Deprecate Turkish intervention, but think it a lesser evil than the two to which I have alluded, giving some reasons.
>
> Then propose the European element, as sketched out in my private letter.
>
> Any concessions to Europe after any demonstrations on the part of the German powers and Italy would place us in a false position; but if made spontaneously and jointly by France and England, would not have that inconvenience.
>
> Please reflect upon the way such arguments might best be put, but let me have all your opinions upon it.
>
> Such able letters as your last are very valuable.

Another letter written on the same day asks for advice as to what should be done "if the crisis arrives, as is probable, in a week." It was very evident that the Cabinet had no definite plan of their own, and were only too glad of the opportunity of consulting some one whose opinion was worth having.

[286] The Treaty of Berlin assigned Dulcigno to the Turks but later negotiations, reversed this. On 26 August 1880, an international naval squadron was sent to the waters in front of this town, headed by Lord Alcester, who persuaded the Ottomans to respect the agreements and to abandon Dulcigno, which was thus annexed to the Principality of Montenegro on 30 November.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, January 22, 1882.

I have received this morning your two letters of yesterday about Egypt; and I have reconsidered the letters from me of the 19th to which they are answers.

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There exists at this moment one new difficulty, the uncertainty whether Gambetta will still be in office this day week.

I do not, however, find in this circumstance any reason to modify the views expressed in my long letter.

Whoever may be in office here at the time, if we proposed to call in the other Powers, we should be held (to use Commercial Treaty slang) to have "denounced" our good understanding with France. We should be reproached with deserting our comrade at the critical moment, and I am seriously afraid that for a long time the feeling in France towards England would be bitter, and the relations of the French Government towards the English Government more than cold.

In my communication to the French Government respecting Egypt, there are some topics in particular which would require delicate handling.

First of these, I should mention Turkish intervention. This has been a subject of difference between France and England for half a century, and the French have a traditional feeling on the subject at all times. But at this moment they (rightly or wrongly) think it a matter of vital importance to them with regard to Algeria and Tunis, and they would go very great lengths to resist the introduction of the Turkish Troops into Egypt, or the increase of Turkish influence there. They always suspect us of hankering after Turkish support against them, not reflecting that our influence at Constantinople is not so predominant as when they supported Mehemet Ali[287] against the Porte and England.

Another topic on which the French might be sensitive would be the question of governing a country of Orientals. This is a matter on which I feel strongly myself, but it would need to be dealt with very cautiously, or the French would see in it a sneer against their own shortcomings in Tunis and even in Algeria.
The objections to joint dual occupation are strong, but almost any statement of them would apply with equal force, or more, to joint sextuple occupation, or to the occupation by two Powers as mandatories of the rest.

[287] The Ottoman Empire had the practice of installing into its provinces rulers who had no connections with the population so as to avoid setting up rival power centres based on tribal or family affiliations. This system was upset by Muhammad Ali (1769 – 1849) who was a man of Albanian origin. Following the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon and the subsequent expulsion of the French by the British and Turks, Muhammad Ali became the *de facto* ruler of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, acting in the main independently of the Sultan while still ostensibly part of the his Empire. The key change was that against precedent he appointed his son, Ibrahim Pasha, as his successor. Muhammad Ali's dynasty ended with King Farouk being overthrown by a military coup in 1952 and his infant son, Ahmed Fuad, being deposed in 1953.

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> Malet, I see, telegraphs that the Chamber would, he thinks, listen to the united Great Powers, but would not listen to England and France alone.
>
> Admitting that Malet is right (and he generally is right), there always remains the difficulty as to putting this cumbersome six-wheeled waggon into motion in any reasonable time.
>
> And this brings me to the question in your second letter, what course should I recommend, if the crisis, as is probable, arises in a week.
>
> It seems to me that in that case either things must be let "slide," or England and France must take some step together, without waiting for the other Powers.

All the anxious speculations which had taken place with regard to Gambetta's future foreign policy turned out to be quite unnecessary, for on January 27, after little more than two months of office, he resigned, having been defeated, like any ordinary political mediocrity, on a question of domestic interest. His place was taken by M. de Freycinet, who succeeded in forming a respectable Ministry, but whose policy with regard to Egypt was as vague and undecided as that of the British Government, and whose views with regard to a Commercial Treaty were supposed to be identical with those of his predecessor.

Advantage was taken of the change by Lord Granville to again urge the substitution of the Concert of Europe for purely Anglo-French control in Egypt, and Freycinet showed himself much more amenable than Gambetta. As far as can be gathered, the attitude of both Governments was the reverse of heroic; the British Government was anxious to hand over its responsibility to other parties, and the French Government was

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not disposed to take any initiative at all. The French were, in fact, waiting for England to make a suggestion, and while perhaps ready to act in conjunction, wished that the responsibility of whatever proceedings were adopted in common, should rest primarily, if not exclusively, upon England. The Tunis enterprise had proved to be so much more troublesome and expensive than had been expected, that the Government shrank from becoming involved in anything of the same nature in Egypt. But the condition of affairs in Egypt was such that even the timid Freycinet Government might find its hand forced. An insult to a French functionary might produce an outbreak of Chauvinism which would force the Government to send a force to avenge it, and Gambetta would certainly have had a force ready for a contingency of this kind.

Nubar Pasha was in Paris at the time, and his views on the Egyptian situation were not without interest.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 7, 1882.

> I do not find the least diminution of the French opposition to Turkish intervention in Egypt, even if it were only moral.

> Nubar has been here for some months, and often comes to see me. His first object in life seems to be to get Blignières out of Egypt, and his second to get Tewfik deposed. I conclude that he thinks that both are obstacles to his own return to power. His language is, that the dictation of the English and French Controllers in Egypt was more than any country could bear; that the present state of things is much better; office and power being in the same hands; that Arabi Bey and his compeers will do very well if they are properly managed, and that two quiet, conciliatory (perhaps we should read imbecile) Controllers would keep everything straight.

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> I think he inclines to the moral intervention of the Sultan. He seems to be intriguing with Germany. He had an interview with Freycinet, to whom, according to his own account, he held the language I have described above. He talks more ably than any one else about Egypt, but always with a view to his own interests.

Any one who ever conversed with the late Nubar Pasha could not fail to be impressed with his ability, but like many other able Orientals, he was a consummate intriguer, and probably the predominant feeling in his mind was a desire to be reinstated in power. It should be explained that, at this time, Arabi was already practically at the head of the Government, although only occupying the post of Minister of War, and that M. de Blignières was still French Controller. M. de Blignières, however, resigned his post on March 12, and an open letter[288] from him to M. Clémenceau threw a lurid light on the tortuous and inexplicable course of French policy in Egypt.

> "*Lorsqu'il (Cherif Pasha) a du quitter le pouvoir; lorsque j'ai compris que les chefs du parti militaire, qui l'avaient renversé, pouvaient compter sur la bienveillance de notre gouvernement, ce jour-là, ne me faisant aucune illusion sur les conséquences nécessaires de cette politique nouvelle, j'ai résigné mes fonctions*."[289]

If, therefore, M. de Blignières was correct, the French were playing a double game; ostensibly acting in concert with England against the Nationalist agitation in Egypt, while secretly encouraging Arabi and his friends to persevere in their efforts. In one respect, however, they were consistent, namely in their opposition to Turkish intervention, and the traditional French

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opposition to Turkish influence in Egypt was accentuated in consequence of the recent events in Tunis and Algeria.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, April 4, 1882.

> You will have seen by the despatches I sent you by post yesterday that Freycinet has at last put the dots on his i's, and distinctly proposed that Tewfik shall be deposed and Halim put in his place. I cannot say I take to the idea. As you said to Tissot, there

[288] *Egypt and the Egyptian Question*, Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace. (LN)

[289] When he (Sherif Pasha) had to leave power; when I understood that the leaders of the military party, who had overthrown him, could count on the benevolence of our government, on that day, having no illusions about the necessary consequences of this new policy, I resigned my office. (*Google Translate*)

might be some good in it if Halim had great moral and intellectual qualities. But I don't see that we have any reason to suppose he has such qualities. Nor indeed, if he had, do I see how his mere appointment would at once set things straight in Egypt. The removal of Ismail was a great blow to the prestige of the Khediviate, and it would require a genius to re-establish its authority, if another deposition takes place in so short a time. I do not understand how Freycinet reconciles his present idea with his objection to Turkish interference. If the Khedive is in daily fear of being deposed by the Sultan, there will be abject submission to Yildiz Kiosk and a constant flow of *backsheesh*[290] to the Porte.

Halim no doubt promises the French that he will be their man, and if he becomes so, they may go great lengths to support him; but how will this suit us? And how long will it be before it leads to something very like armed intervention of the French in support of him?

Then it seems to me that to depose Tewfik would be something very like treachery, after the dual declaration made to him in January.

It seems to me that the things to aim at should be: to keep Tewfik; to give him some strength against military dictation, and to preserve the Anglo-French Control, which means a reasonable financial administration, and gives us at any rate some means of knowing what the Egyptians (perhaps I ought to add) what the French are about.

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The immoral proposal to depose Tewfik met with no encouragement from Her Majesty's Government, as was only to be expected, and the only conclusion to be drawn from the equivocal language of M. de Freycinet was that he felt armed intervention to be inevitable, but wanted the proposal to come from England. He tried to persuade Lord Lyons to propose a plan of his own which should be put forward privately, but this met with no approval at all. '"Private and between ourselves conversations," between Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers generally cause mischief.'

As the situation in Egypt continued to get worse, the British Government was forced to take some action, and accordingly suggested that three generals, French, English, and Turkish, should be sent to Egypt "to restore discipline to the Egyptian army." As it was not proposed that these generals should employ anything but moral force, it is difficult to see how they could have succeeded, but Lord Granville appears to have considered that it would obviate armed interference, and the French Government having no plan of their own were presumably ready to accept almost anything, but caused considerable embarrassment by asking for a pledge that Turkish intervention by force of arms, in any circumstances, would not be tolerated. What Freycinet wanted, in fact, was to be able to declare to the Chamber that England and France were agreed not to allow armed Ottoman intervention.

[290] Baksheesh (from Persian: bakhshesh) can have different meanings in different languages and countries in the Middle East and South Asia. It can mean tipping, charitable giving, and certain forms of political corruption and bribery.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 5, 1882.

Freycinet asked me just now to let him speak to me "privately and academically" about intervention in Egypt. He said his great objection to Turkish intervention was that as matters

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now stand, it would take place for a vague and indefinite object: that thus it would be impossible to fix the exact time at which that object would be accomplished, and that thus the Turks would have pretexts for prolonging it indefinitely, for mixing themselves up in the administration, for laying their hands on the Treasury, and what not.

If the intervention was simply for installing a new Khedive, his objections would be less. This would be a single definite sovereign act of the Sultan. It might be accomplished in a week or ten days, and the Ottoman troops would have no pretext for staying, or for interfering in the administration. He should not object to a Turkish, French, and English fleet going to Egypt to support some single definite act of this kind, nor even, speaking solely for himself personally, to Turkish troops being landed.

After some questioning from me, he said that, for a single definite object, he personally might even prefer a Turkish intervention, but that for any such vague purpose as supporting Tewfik and restoring order, he thought Turkish intervention absolutely inadmissible. If anything of that kind was to be attempted, Anglo-French seemed to him the least open to objection. Italian seemed to him to be worse than Turkish.

His idea was that we should set on foot some Government that could stand by itself. Under Tewfik no such Government would in his opinion be ever possible. He had no predilection for any particular individual as Khedive: all he wanted was to have some reasonably efficient man at the head of the Government.

He begged me to consider all this as strictly confidential, personal, private, and academic; and he said that except in a conversation of this character, he could not even have mentioned the possibility of France consenting under any conceivable circumstances to Turkish intervention; for he was by no means sure that it would ever be agreed to by his colleagues or borne by public opinion.

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The "confidential, personal, private, and academic" character of M. de Freycinet's conversation was, of course, merely intended to conceal his own vacillation and fear of having to communicate to the Chambers any announcement that he had sanctioned Turkish intervention in any shape whatever. A little later, however, he nerved himself to make a proposal that there should be a joint Anglo-French Naval Demonstration off Alexandria. An allied squadron consequently proceeded to that port, and its appearance produced a temporary panic in the ranks of the Nationalists; the latter, however, speedily recovered when it was realized that there were no troops on board, and that the Sultan, far from approving of the demonstration, had protested against it. The ultimatum of the allies was practically rejected, and Arabi, who had been compelled to resign, was reinstated in office nominally as Minister

of War, in reality as dictator. To make Freycinet's position still worse, he got into difficulties in the Chamber.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 26, 1882.

> The explosion has come, and if the irritation that prevails in Paris to-day continues, Freycinet will be out of office, or will, *per fas et nefas*,[291] back out of his proposal that Turkish intervention may be resorted to in Egypt. His Chauvin speech in the Chamber about French preponderance, and what not, is now of course turned against him.
>
> There is an impression here that in order to keep Gambetta out of office, Bismarck may help Freycinet to eat his words.
>
> I am afraid that now, whether Freycinet stays in or goes out, it will be next to impossible to have any comfortable understanding with France about intervention in Egypt.

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> Even supposing all the other Powers cordially united with us, to repeat the experiment of 1840 would be dangerous, and would produce a scarcely ever to be remedied coldness (to call it by a mild name) between us and France.
>
> Then I share all Dufferin's[292] misgivings as to the possibility of either controlling the Turks if they set foot in Egypt, or of ever getting them out. I have also a very strong fear of my own as to the mischief they would do to the country. Even if they went with the acquiescence of France, I think we should be constantly in hot water with the French as long as they stayed.
>
> If Gambetta comes in he will no doubt again propose joint Anglo-French intervention. Unless the Porte is backed up very strongly indeed, he will very likely make its intervention in Egypt something like a casus belli with Turkey—or in fact do as the French did with regard to Tunis—declare that he will oppose by force the despatch of Turkish troops to Egypt.

The Anglo-French Naval Demonstration had been intended as a compromise between the two Governments over the question of Turkish intervention, but when it was seen to be useless, it was agreed that the Sultan should be asked to send a Special Commission to Cairo, and communications were made to the other Powers with a view to convoking a European Conference on Egypt; M. de Freycinet, who had for three months opposed the English proposal for Turkish intervention, suddenly discovering that there was no danger about it, if requested jointly by England and France. The Turkish Commission which proceeded to Egypt was not more successful in restoring order than the Anglo-French Naval

[291] By fair means or foul.
[292] Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826 – 1902), was a British statesman, traveller and prominent member of Victorian society. He served as Governor-General of Canada and Viceroy of India.

Demonstration. It consisted of three persons; one of whom, Dervish Pasha,[293] was instructed to support the Khedive and to threaten the

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Nationalist leaders; the second Commissioner was instructed to support Arabi and his associates; and the duty of the third Commissioner was to spy upon his two colleagues. In order to make everything quite safe, the latter was accompanied by a fourth official, whose duty it was to spy upon him, and it was perhaps owing to these over-elaborated precautions that the mission proved to be a complete failure.

On June 11, the massacre at Alexandria took place, and armed intervention became more and more inevitable, but some Governments still entertained the hope that diplomacy might yet be successful, and the Conference assembled at Constantinople towards the end of the month. The chief advantage of the Conference was that it disclosed the views of the various Great Powers, and the conditions which were to govern the despatch of Turkish troops to Egypt were of so engrossing a nature that they were still being discussed when the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought two months subsequently, and the victorious British troops entered Cairo.

The vacillations and dilatoriness of M. de Freycinet irritated even the easy-going Lord Granville, who complained of having twice been put in a hole by him, and was justifiably anxious as to how he could defend his Egyptian policy successfully in Parliament if the French Government could not be relied upon for any consistent line of action. But while admitting that nearly everything had gone wrong up till now, and that the failure of the Sultan's Special Mission made the outlook still more gloomy, he consoled himself with the reflection (which was shortly afterwards shown in one respect to be quite erroneous) that,

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"we have avoided a rupture with France, a rupture with Europe, and a possible war." Within a few weeks, the error of this last assumption was to be conclusively established.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 20, 1882.

> I do not hope much from the Conference: certainly I have very little expectation of its forwarding the strong measures which the Alexandria massacres seem to me to call for imperatively.
>
> I think Germany will be very little inclined to urge the despatch of Turkish troops. Bismarck's great object appears to be to keep Freycinet in, and he fears, not without some reason, that when the first Turkish soldier sets his foot in Egypt, Freycinet will fall at Paris.
> The Freycinet Ministry would probably be succeeded by a Cabinet in which Gambetta would not actually have a seat, but over which he would exercise very great influence.

[293] İbrahim Dervish Pasha (1811/1812 – 1896) was a high-ranking Ottoman military commander and statesman. He was a key figure used by Sultan Abdul Hamid II to reassert central authority in restive provinces. In June 1882, during the Urabi Revolt (a nationalist uprising led by Ahmed Urabi), Sultan Abdul Hamid II dispatched Dervish Pasha as an extraordinary envoy to Cairo. His mission was to reconcile the Khedive (the local ruler) and the nationalist rebels while attempting to prevent a British military intervention. The mission was largely unsuccessful. Tensions remained high, leading to the British bombardment of Alexandria in July 1882 and the subsequent British occupation of Egypt.

Bismarck very probably exaggerates the strength of that influence and looks for more direct hostility to Germany than it would really provoke. But he is perhaps right in thinking that, under Gambetta's influence, France would coquet with the Anti-German party in Russia, and would lose no opportunity of fostering enmity to Germany whenever she could find an opening for doing so. At all events, it would be impossible for Germany to feel as much at her ease as she does now, if Gambetta were the virtual director of French policy.

Freycinet's strength lies partly in the disinclination of the nation for anything like what it calls adventures, but mainly in the dread which the present Chamber has of Gambetta, the *Scrutin de Liste*[294] and a dissolution.

Meanwhile general dissatisfaction with the whole state of things, and despondency do not diminish. People who looked to Gambetta as the man to set things straight are directing their eyes to other quarters, and there is even a sort of revival of Orleanism.

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A few hours after this letter reaches you, you will in all probability receive from me by telegraph the French answer to the proposal to them to concert measures with us for the protection of the Suez Canal. I don't think Freycinet likes the idea of anything which may tend towards sending French troops to Egypt. He seems to me to want to lean on the Conference in the hope that by so doing, he may be able to stand quite still. Strange to say, the Chamber and the public seem to be in the same mood. They like to think that it is more upon England than upon them that the discredit of putting up with the Alexandria massacre and the recent patch up in Egypt would fall. Their present pusillanimity seems so unnatural that I cannot think it will last. Gambetta will rouse them from it, if he has the chance.

They are full of suspicions of designs on our part to seize the Suez Canal with or without the assistance or connivance of Turkey. You will see by a telegram I have just sent, that Freycinet has asked me a question about this. I imagine the French would object very much less to our acting entirely alone than to our acting in any way with the Porte.

The Sultan seems to tell the Marquis de Noailles all kinds of stories against England and Dufferin. It is not, however, from Freycinet that I hear this.

In Lord Lyons's opinion, the French, at this stage, were quite prepared for England acting alone in Egypt, but he considered that it was most important to be very frank with them, to afford them every opportunity of joining us, but to do it in such a way that other Powers should not be given too much time in which to raise objections.

It was not apparently until June 27, 1882, that the British Government seriously considered the probability of having to employ "material force" in Egypt, whether alone or in concert with other Powers; but in

[294] Party List voting. It is a voting system where voters select a political party rather than individual candidates, and the number of representatives elected from each party is based on the percentage of votes they receive. It is a form of proportional representation.

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consequence of the danger of the situation and of the necessity of acting quickly, they then applied to the War Office for information as to what forces were available for an expedition. In view of our alleged military capacity at the present time, it is of interest to learn what the War Office was prepared to do thirty-one years ago. The military authorities stated that they were prepared to embark within twenty-four hours, 3500 infantry, and 500 garrison artillerymen, with a small siege train, from Malta and Gibraltar, with necessary camp equipage and reserves of food and ammunition. These troops could be conveyed in the ships of the Channel Squadron now in the Mediterranean. A force of about 12,000 fighting men, complete in infantry, cavalry, and field artillery, with forty-eight field guns, was also available, to embark from England. The first 5000 of the infantry could sail within a week, and the whole force could leave England in a fortnight from the date of the order, with complete supplies for an army in the field. The force from England would be made up partially by the First Class Army Reserve, and a Brigade was also available to be sent from Bombay to Suez. Such was the purport of a most confidential communication to Lord Granville from the War Office, dated June 27, 1882.

On July 11, the bombardment of Alexandria by the British fleet took place; the departure of the French ships marking, in an unmistakeable form, the refusal of the French Government to incur further responsibility, and foreshadowing the permanent renunciation of the old French position in Egypt.

The news of the Alexandria bombardment, which, owing to the absence of troops for landing,

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could hardly be described as a very effective operation, was received without much excitement in Paris, and Freycinet stated that the Chamber would certainly not have sanctioned the co-operation of the French fleet. The main point on which sensitiveness was shown was the Suez Canal. The French seemed disposed to resent any landing of English troops alone at Port Said, and to insist, if not on joining with us, on sending a "lateral" expedition of their own. It was important, therefore, that they should be given a *bona fide* invitation to join in anything we might determine to do, and the French were accordingly invited by Lord Granville to concert measures at once for the protection of the canal; questions of detail being left to the Conference at Constantinople. Upon the whole the bombardment of Alexandria had tended to improve rather than to impair Anglo-French relations, and the chief danger seemed to lie in the projected Turkish intervention, which would alienate public opinion and provoke strong opposition from Gambetta and his followers. Extraordinary French Naval Credits were voted and Lord Granville appears to have thought that joint action was secured after all, at least as far as the Canal was concerned.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
July 19, 1882.

> I wish you and ourselves joy of the renewed *entente cordiale*. It will not be popular in many quarters here, but it is an immense national advantage, and ought to relieve us from many dangers.
>
> I am not in the least jealous of the dual action in the Canal, though I should prefer its being triangular. But I own I dread it, if we are obliged, as is probable, to intervene in Egypt itself.

I hope they do not think we are pressing them too fast. I believe the Cabinet will settle to send 15,000 men to Malta. If so, I will let you know.

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Remember I am always grateful for suggestions and criticisms. I hear Bismarck is really ill and cannot sleep at night. The preparation of his own financial measures does not act as an anodyne.

I am told that the debate in the Commons last night did us good and not harm. I suppose we shall have a more formidable one in the Lords.

It is rumoured that the Peers will pass the Second Reading of the Arrears Bill, and mutilate it in Committee.

The voting of the extraordinary French Naval Credits, which had caused it to be supposed that the French Government intended to take some decided action, was soon shown to mean nothing at all. Freycinet, whose position had been much shaken, was in the uncomfortable situation of being blamed by the Chamber for doing too much and denounced in the Senate for not doing enough. On July 19, an important debate took place in the Chamber, during which Gambetta, with his accustomed eloquence, adjured the Government to adhere to the English alliance at all costs, and urged that to quarrel with England would be the most fatal of mistakes. The Credits asked for were agreed to, and the Government obtained a large majority; but when Freycinet appeared in support of his modest proposals before the Senate, he was obliged to admit that the Conference at Constantinople had refused to entrust France and England with a Mandate, and that in consequence of this refusal the French Government would leave England to act alone, and would confine their own action to the protection of the Suez Canal. A fresh credit amounting to about £350,000 was asked for with this object, but met with formidable opposition.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 26, 1882.

When I saw Freycinet this afternoon he seemed in absolute despair. There are two modes of escape which are supposed to be still open.

Though the majority of the Chamber are strongly opposed to military intervention in Egypt, they may still hesitate to turn Freycinet out, lest by showing it to be impossible to make their own existence compatible with anything like a stable Government in France, they may bring about a dissolution.

It is said that they are casting about for some means of refusing the Credit and yet not turning out Freycinet; and the second device, which might enable Freycinet to stay in, is the singularly undignified one of his playing into their hand, by declaring that he does not make the Credit a Cabinet question, and that if it be refused, he will bow to the will of the Chamber and withdraw from the protection of the Canal.
So long as it is undeniable that we have *bona fide* invited and pressed France to take part in all our operations in Egypt, I shall not break my heart if she chooses to decline to do so.

I believe that Freycinet would have been in a better plight if he had taken a decided course either way; if he had distinctly refused all intervention, or if he had boldly joined England in all her operations.

On July 29, the question of voting the fresh Credit was brought forward in the Chamber and made one of confidence in the Ministry. Every one by this time was much alarmed at the prospect of France being dragged into some vague and desperate adventure; the Credit was refused by an overwhelming majority; Freycinet resigned office, and France definitely retired from the scene of action.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, July 30, 1882.

Among the innumerable Ministerial crises which I have seen here, I do not recollect one in which there has been so much uncertainty as to who would be the new Prime Minister.

Grévy, in conformity with his own views, and with those of the great majority of the Chamber and indeed of the country, is trying to form an absolutely non-intervention Cabinet. But such a Cabinet might have difficulties with the Senate. Léon Say and Jules Ferry, the most able members of the late Ministry, were for full intervention and the English Alliance.

Freycinet very unwisely began with a perfectly idle dispute with Gambetta as to whether the English Government would, or would not, have consented to armed intervention with France only, if Gambetta had remained in power. Gambetta did not speak yesterday, but he and his followers voted against Freycinet.

Hohenlohe seemed, I hear, dreadfully put out by the result of the division yesterday. It was Bismarck's communication which gave Freycinet the coup de grâce. Hohenlohe had evidently hoped that it would save him, by giving him an excuse for withdrawing the Bill.

I was very much disappointed to hear from Freycinet that Russia had gone back to the Conference. I hoped her retirement would have given us a good opportunity of freeing ourselves from that cumbrous clog.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Aug. 1, 1882.

All is still uncertain as to who the new French Ministers will be. Grévy is doing his best to keep Freycinet, and Hohenlohe is working in the same direction, which is not wise. Hitherto Freycinet has positively declined, but he is a man who sometimes changes his mind. He will be

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in an extraordinarily false position if he does come back. Grévy may, perhaps, manage to appoint a warming-pan sort of Ministry, just to keep the offices warm during the recess and to make room for something more serious in October.

> The French are in very good disposition towards us at this moment. The way to keep them so will be to endeavour to make their present position comfortable to them, without being humiliating, and, above all, not to crow over them, as part of our press seems too much inclined to do. Their fleet, next to our own, is the most important factor in the Mediterranean question. We can do as well or better, without any aid from France or other countries, but we ought to have the field to ourselves.
>
> I wish we were well rid of that dangerous Conference. I had a sort of hope that just now it might have a sort of use, as a means of letting the other Powers talk while we were acting. But in fact, as worked by Bismarck and by the Turks under his direction, it seems merely to supply the machinery for formally placing us in opposition to the so-called European Concert, and for embarrassing France. I think the French would be glad to be delivered from it.
>
> Public opinion in France is at this moment friendly to us, but it is in a very susceptible state.

A new Ministry was in course of time formed under M. Duclerc, one of the many uninteresting mediocrities who have governed France during the last forty years, and a sort of formula was agreed upon that there was no "solution of continuity in the Entente," which was not intended to commit the French to anything in particular.

A vast amount has been written respecting the events in Egypt in 1882; much of it by persons who occupied responsible and important positions at the time; but the reasons for the inaction and eventual retirement of

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the French have never been clearly explained. Probably the French themselves would be unable to give a satisfactory explanation, and would attribute their inglorious attitude to the Freycinet Government, which did not know its own mind. But it may be assumed that a variety of reasons were responsible for the French refusal of co-operation with England. Had the invitation been received some months earlier, it would probably have been accepted with enthusiasm; but the Tunis expedition, which had opened with so much success and enthusiasm, had proved a much more troublesome and unsatisfactory business than had been anticipated, and had created a decided disinclination for further enterprises in North Africa. In the second place, the difficulties of an Egyptian campaign were greatly over-estimated; the French calculation was that no less than 60,000 men would be necessary, and the ordinary French Minister would not venture to allow so many men to leave the country. Lastly, the French were quite unable, rightly or wrongly, to get it out of their minds that they were being deliberately led into a trap by Bismarck, and this by itself was sufficient to daunt a Government of the Freycinet type.

France having now definitely declined, the British invitation was transferred to Italy.

> "We have asked the Italians to join us," Lord Granville wrote on July 27, "but we have not pressed them. They also will try to *se faire prier*,[295] and will be too late. I told Menabrea[296] I could not delay operations.

[295] To be asked

> "I hope they will decline, but I myself was not very hot for even the offer. But the balance of argument seemed to be in favour of it, and you did not raise any objection to it.
>
> "Please explain that the *Times* is entirely off the track as to our wish for a protectorate."

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The refusal of the Italians was welcome and not unexpected, and as no other Power was in the least inclined to co-operate, the British Government was able to set about the task of smashing Arabi with a clear conscience, in its own way, and unhampered by allies; for the Turks, who had agreed to send troops, protracted the negotiations with regard to their employment to such an extent, that the campaign was finished long before an agreement was arrived at.

Lord Cromer in his well-known work *Modern Egypt*, has exposed with much skill and lucidity the futile nature of many of the proposals put forward by the British and French Governments during the period that they were acting together. But the really remarkable fact is, that each Government succeeded in bringing about the result which it least desired. The policy of the British Government was governed by a sincere, if mistaken, determination not to be dragged into assuming sole responsibility for Egypt, and in particular to avoid the necessity of military occupation. The efforts of the French Government were chiefly directed towards the prevention of Turkey or any other Power establishing its predominant influence in Egypt, and that French policy should have unconsciously and involuntarily thrust England into this unsought and unwelcome position is one of the real ironies of recent history.

Perhaps the most fortunate event for England during the crisis which preceded the Egyptian expedition was the fall of Gambetta early in the year. Had that statesman remained in office he would certainly have never consented to remain a supine and indifferent spectator; he would undoubtedly have insisted on France

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taking an active part: a joint expedition would have taken place, and the sequel might have followed the Schleswig-Holstein precedent.

It was hardly to be expected that the skill and rapidity with which the campaign against Arabi was conducted would evoke much enthusiasm in France, nor could the French reasonably expect that upon the restoration of peace and order the old state of things would be renewed. Before the end of October, Lord Granville informed the French Ambassador in London that the Control would not be restored; and when the French Government objected, on the ground that such an alteration must be submitted to the Powers, it was pointed out the matter was one for the Khedive to decide himself. In order to soothe wounded French feelings various compromises in the shape of posts in the Egyptian administration were offered in vain.

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[296] Luigi Federico Menabrea (1809 – 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.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 3, 1882.

I thought it simpler and better to let Duclerc have a copy of your despatch, as you had no objection to my doing so. He has not yet given any sign of life since he received it.

The argument that the Financial Adviser will have only a small position in Egypt, or at all events a less important position than the Controllers, cuts both ways here. Duclerc's line is to say that we are making a distinction without any real difference: that in practice the adviser will have all and more than all the powers of the Controllers; and that thus virtually France is to be deprived of her share in the Control without receiving, even nominally, any compensation.

A complaint of a very different kind is made by the *Haute Finance*. They say that

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the only real compensation which could be given to France, if she is to be ousted from the Control, would be the establishment, under the auspices and responsibility of England, of such a strong practical supervision of the Egyptian Administration as would make the regular payment of the Debt and the maintenance of the commercial and other interests of foreigners secure. They pretend that the proposed establishment of the Financial Adviser is in form injurious to the dignity of France, while in substance it does not sufficiently provide for the control by any one of the Egyptian Government. These seem to be the opinions of a very influential body here. It is quite consistent with them that Dufferin's mission should be looked on with favour by those who hold them.

Clémenceau's views seem to be confined to himself.

The thing most favourable to our coming to an understanding with France, is the very general belief among Frenchmen that Bismarck is egging indirectly both England and France on to a quarrel.

In the meantime the alarm caused by the anarchists is enough to keep the minds of the great majority of the French fixed on their own internal affairs. People are sending away their securities and other valuables to foreign countries. I suppose an absolute outbreak in force enough to resist the Government, if the Government be resolute, is not to be expected. But there may be explosions of dynamite here and there, and the employment of the other new-fangled means of creating panic which the French seem to be inclined to adopt from the Russians.

The competition of America and other causes are producing a curious change in the French peasantry, and a change not favourable to peace and order. The tenacity with which the very small proprietors have hitherto clung to their land is visibly diminishing. They now offer their land for sale to an extent hitherto quite unprecedented. They say that they can get better interest by putting the price of the land into the funds or other speculations, and can thus lead a pleasant life, instead of slaving from morning to night to get a bare subsistence out of their fields. The

tendency of all this is to reduce the numbers of the hitherto ultra-Conservative laborious class, and

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to fill the towns more and more with idle and very often disappointed and discontented speculators, who form a material ready to the hand of anarchists.

The letters from Lord Granville show that although the British Government had embarked most unwillingly upon the Egyptian enterprise, and viewed additional responsibility with so much horror that some members of the Cabinet were even opposed to the office of Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government being given to an Englishman, yet that the Cabinet was at all events unanimously against the maintenance of the Control, and of the old dual arrangements. The French Government, with an entire absence of logic and common sense, was quite indisposed to recognize the complete change in the situation which had taken place, and continued to claim that England and France should remain on an equality as regarded themselves, and in a superior position as far as the other Powers were concerned. The difficulty lay in discovering some means of satisfying French vanity without yielding on the essential point of equality, and efforts to ascertain what would be considered satisfactory did not meet with much success.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 14, 1882.

I tried to make Duclerc see yesterday that the practical way towards obtaining some satisfaction for French *amour-propre*[297] was to enter upon the discussion of details as to the Boards in Egypt. I went as far as I could without running the risk of provoking lofty language, which might have been an obstacle to moderate arrangements hereafter.

However, at the moment Duclerc did not go back from his old grounds. He does not

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insist upon a literal re-establishment of the Control, but he does claim a virtual return to the *status quo ante*,[298] and he interprets that status as equality between England and France and superiority of the two jointly over other Powers.

The single Financial Councillor pleases no one here. As he must of course be an Englishman, the sticklers for French *gloriole*[299] declare that whether his functions be great or small, he will simply be a symbol of English supremacy and French decadency. To the *haute* and *petite* finance, the mode of his appointment and the smallness of his powers seem an additional cause of complaint, as not giving sufficient security for a proper administration of the finances of Egypt. I shall be very anxious to hear how it all strikes Dufferin.

In fact, at the present moment, the French are too uneasy about their internal affairs to pay much attention to Egypt. But they may fire up if any special event comes to

[297] Self esteem.
[298] The state of affairs that had existed previously.
[299] Glory

> irritate them. It is more, however, future lasting ill will than violence at the moment which I apprehend. If we leave them bitterly discontented with arrangements in Egypt, I hardly see when we shall be able to withdraw our troops and still maintain the influence which is a necessity to us.

The idea that the British occupation of Egypt was anything more than a temporary expedient does not seem to have been considered a serious possibility by any English Minister so far. Partly by luck, partly by the skill of Sir Garnet Wolseley[300] and Lord Dufferin, we had found ourselves in possession of Egypt, unhampered by association with any European Power or with the Turks; but for a time it looked as if the brilliant results achieved were to be thrown away because the British Government had no clear idea what its policy was to be. Fortunately for all concerned, the step was taken of sending Lord Dufferin on a special mission to Cairo,

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and unlike most special missions of more recent date, the experiment proved a complete success, and quickly destroyed the mischievous delusion entertained by a section of English politicians that an evacuation of Egypt was possible at any early date. This delusion had never been shared by the French, who naturally judged the action of others in the light in which they themselves would have acted under similar circumstances, and who made little effort to conceal their annoyance.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 1, 1882.

> I don't succeed in making Duclerc *coulant*[301] about Egypt. He rather implied that it was not from Tissot that he had heard that you were going to send him a favourable communication, and that you were thinking of sending an expert to discuss details. He did not, however, say who it was that told him. Perhaps d'Aunay[302] may have had something to do with it. Duclerc went on to hint at there being two currents in the English Cabinet, one more favourable to the French than the other, but I declined to listen to this. He talked as if he had some special source of information as to your intentions and sentiments. He seemed to take to the idea of a discussion between experts.
>
> He was amiable about Madagascar, but we shall see what his written answer will be. He represented himself as having overwhelmed the Ambassadors with kindness, and then as having broken off the negotiation on the point of the leases being for 99 years.
>
> In the meantime prospects at home do not brighten. Railroads and other public works have been begun, with very little system, in all kinds of places to please Deputies and

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[300] Field Marshal Garnet Joseph Wolseley, 1st Viscount Wolseley (1833 – 1913) was an Anglo-Irish officer in the British Army. He served in Burma, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, China, Canada and widely throughout Africa—including his Ashanti campaign (1873 – 1874) and the Nile Expedition against Mahdist Sudan in 1884 – 85. Wolseley served as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces from 1895 to 1900. He had a central role in modernizing the efficiency of the British Army

[301] Literally flowing but figuratively flexible

[302] Charles-Marie-Stephen Le Peletier, Comte d'Aunay (1840 – 1918) was a French diplomat and politician. He had a long career in diplomacy, between 1862 and 1894, then entered politics. He became the French Ambassador in Berne between 1907 and 1911.

their constituents. The Government dare not stop them for fear of what the workmen would do if large numbers of them found themselves out of work. To go on, is ruinous to the finances. There must be a limit to the floating debt. The Government are again negotiating with the railway companies.

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People are beginning to talk of Saviours of Society. The names most mentioned are those of General Chanzy and the Duc d'Aumale. Gambetta would have been everybody's man, if he had never been Minister. However, I don't think that we are very near any violent change.

Grévy is certainly not brisk, but he may grow old without things coming to an early catastrophe.

There is a not unaccredited rumour that it was in wresting the revolver from a female hand that Gambetta got wounded. The bulletins at the office of the République Française are that he is going on as well as possible.

The last paragraph refers to the wounding of Gambetta by a pistol shot. The accident (which terminated fatally) occurred at his villa outside Paris, and was surrounded by a mystery which has never been dispelled, but it may be assumed that a lady really was involved.

The allusion to Madagascar relates to the mission despatched by the Queen of the Hovas[303] to Europe in the autumn in the vain hope of coming to some agreement with the French Government, which had raised questions ominously resembling those which had, in the previous year, formed the prelude to the Tunis expedition. The Hovas, like the Kroumirs,[304] constituted "a serious danger" to the French Republic, and demands were put forward which involved general French rights over the whole of Madagascar, and a protectorate over the northwest coast. The unhappy Hova envoys proceeded from Paris to London, but met with little encouragement there, and before long a semi-official announcement was made in which the stereotyped statement, with which small and defenceless states are so painfully familiar, appeared: "The Cabinet is resolved to enforce the respect of the rights and interests of France in Madagascar, and orders in

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Conformity with the situation have, therefore, been sent to the Commander of the French naval station." Signs of the same ominous activity were also beginning to manifest themselves in Tonquin;[305] and the only compensating factor was that Madagascar and Tonquin served to distract a certain amount of French attention from Egypt, although the tone

[303] In 1882, the Queen of the Hovas (the Merina Kingdom of Madagascar) was Ranavalona II who was born in 1829 and reigned from 1868 – 1883. She is best remembered for Christianizing the royal court during her reign. She was succeeded by Queen Ranavalona III, the last monarch of the kingdom.

[304] A semi-nomadic tribal confederation of Berber lineage in the north-west of Tunisia and extending across what later became the Tunisia-Algerian border who found themselves at the centre of French imperial politics. Their foray across the border into Algeria was the pretext for a French invasion of Tunisia. The term keoumir entered French slang to denote a rogue or pillager. (*Google Gemini*)

[305] In the 1880s, Tonquin (also spelled Tonkin) was the northernmost region of modern-day Vietnam. It was a central theatre of French colonial expansion in Southeast Asia during this decade, eventually becoming a cornerstone of French Indochina. (*Google Gemini*)

of the press, and especially of the *République Française*, the organ of Gambetta, became increasingly hostile to England.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 19, 1882.

> There are reports afloat that Gambetta's cure is not going on as steadily as it ought. At all events there is no change for the better in the tone of the *République Française* respecting England in Egypt. I don't like the idea of having the French there in bitter opposition to all we do. It may make it very difficult for us with safety to ourselves to give any large measure of independence to the Egyptian Government. At all events, the less we are able to sacrifice to satisfy French *amour-propre*, the more we must do to give security to legitimate French material interests by providing for a really good honest financial administration. If the French take the protection of their material interests exclusively into their own hands, they may go very great lengths indeed to protect them, if they are seriously threatened; and, besides, the pretext that the credit, property or persons of Frenchmen are threatened, will always be at hand to sanction interference.
>
> At present it looks as if the Duclerc Government would be glad to back out of its expeditions to Tonquin, *etc*., *etc.* The proceedings of the Hova Ambassadors and their supporters in England may make it difficult for the French Government to be as reasonable as it might otherwise wish to be about Madagascar.

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> The prevalent feeling of depression and uneasiness about the general condition of France does not seem to diminish. There seems to be a profound distrust of the abilities, if not of the intentions, of the men who so rapidly succeed one another in office, and no one seems to know where to turn for something better.

It was somewhat unfortunate that French aggression in Tonquin and Madagascar was unconsciously stimulated by the English press. "The English press is driving the French public wild on the subject of Tonquin, Madagascar, and other beyond sea questions, which the Government would probably have been glad enough to back out of if they had been let alone."[306]

Until the end of the year private negotiations continued between Lord Granville and the French Government with reference to the abolition of the Control with completely unsuccessful results.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 26, 1882.

> I hear, not from himself, that Duclerc's present intention is to make a very strong protest if we abolish Control without coming to a previous understanding with France; and that our making our own Control, or that of Europe in general, over the Egyptian finances weak, would not mollify him. On the contrary, he would try to make a point of what he would call our abandonment of French material interests—and deduce

[306] From a letter of Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.

> from it an argument that France is bound to protect them herself. While we are absolutely at two with France, we shall find it very difficult to relax our material hold on Egypt. Egypt for the Egyptians is only too likely to become Egypt for the French.

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> Gambetta's illness seems to have rather strengthened his position. The anxiety of his opponents in the press to make out that he is worse than is really the case and the disgusting statements they have in consequence put forward, have served to impress on friends and foes his importance. According to the best information I have been able to get, he is not at this moment seriously ill, though his recovery is too slow to be satisfactory.
>
> Confidence and tranquillity do not appear to revive in France, and the disappearance of Gambetta would increase uneasiness. People do not exactly know what they are afraid of, but there is a general vague uneasiness. Perhaps the most definite cause of fears or hopes is the intrigue in which certain officers of the army are said to be engaged with a view of putting the Duc d'Aumale at the head of the state.

The childish frame of mind in which the French Government of the day considered the question of the Control may be judged from the fact that Duclerc in private conversation had admitted in the autumn that, if for form's sake, the *status quo ante* could be restored for only five minutes, he would agree subsequently to its immediate abolition. In December, however, he was in a more intractable mood, and, at the end of the year, Lord Granville found it necessary to break off all private negotiations on the subject, observing that it was very painful and disadvantageous to be on bad terms with the French, but that it was, at the least, equally disadvantageous to them.

CHAPTER XVI

ANGLOPHOBIA (1883-1885)

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The first day of 1883 was signalized by the announcement of the death of Gambetta, and those who were present at the Elysée on the occasion of President Grévy's New Year's Day reception will remember the singularly embarrassed demeanour of that uninteresting personage; an embarrassment which might have been accounted for on various grounds. Gambetta's death was followed in a day or two by that of General Chanzy, an event which caused consternation amongst the Monarchical and Conservative parties, as he was looked upon as the only man capable of stopping the too rapid progress of the Republican car. It was doubtless with the view of anticipating other pretenders, that Prince Napoleon seized the opportunity to issue a Proclamation denouncing the Republic, which resulted in his immediate incarceration in the Conciergerie.

For some months there had existed in France a feeling of uneasiness and of distrust in the maintenance of orderly government, and this feeling was greatly increased by the double loss of Gambetta and Chanzy.

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Gambetta was the only man in the Republican party whose ability and popularity were sufficient to induce the country to acquiesce in his wielding great power, and who was believed to have the will and the courage to exercise that power energetically in case of need. Chanzy was looked upon as the only man whose military reputation and influence qualified him to keep the army united and to use it with effect, in the case of grave political troubles.

As for the President of the Republic, M. Grévy, his energy and influence continued to diminish; the Chamber of Deputies was becoming more and more discredited, and the professedly anarchical parties were certainly increasing in violence, and apparently in numbers and influence as well. The public generally, even amongst the lower orders, showed few signs of great attachment to the Republican Government. That Government had not augmented their material prosperity, had not raised their social position, and had not realized their dreams of absolute equality with, or rather of predominance over, the rich and the educated. Every form of Monarchical Government was repugnant to them, but nevertheless a moderate Republic excited no enthusiasm whatsoever. The upper classes were alarmed and discontented; they did not believe that their property was secure, and they considered the work of administration was deplorably carried on by the various obscure Ministers who succeeded each other so rapidly in office; their religious feelings were daily shocked, while bad harvests, bad trade, and an unpromising financial situation added to the general feeling of dissatisfaction.

On the other hand, the "spirited Colonial Policy," which was now so much in evidence, did little to

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counterbalance this feeling, and the attempts which had been made to pander to the national vanity by the overbearing policy adopted towards Madagascar; the extension of French predominance in Tunis; annexations on the Congo; and the consolidation of the French Protectorate over Tonquin and Annam, had met with little success. The disquieting fact from

the English point of view was that ill-feeling towards England, chiefly with regard to Egypt, had risen to a high pitch, and that each successive step taken by the British Government, and each declaration made by it, seemed only to increase the irritation. It was in this direction that, Lord Lyons feared, attempts would be made to divert public discontent by those who might be in power; and the procedure of the new French Government certainly justified the fear. The position which the French Government took up, was that of defending French influence and French interests in Egypt by its own independent means. It declared that by the abolition of the Control, a deep wound had been inflicted upon French dignity, while the principal security for the regular payment of the sums due in regard to the loans had been taken away. It did not hesitate to declare that any tampering with the Law of Liquidation, or with the lands and revenues pledged to the loans; or any failure to provide for the charges on the loans, would be regarded as a breach of international obligations on the part of Egypt, which would warrant the active interference of France. It hardly made any pretence of concealing its intention to work against English influence in Egypt by every means in its power, and unfortunately it was evident that in this anti-English policy it could reckon on the support of public opinion.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 9, 1883.

Blowitz's intelligence certainly comes from the French Foreign Office, sometimes, I dare say, directly, but often only through the *Temps*. The *Temps* is published the afternoon before the day on which it is dated, and some hours before Blowitz's letter goes to the *Times*. Blowitz's letter always goes by telegraph, the *Times* having the exclusive use of a line for some hours every night.

It seems that Ferry will succeed Gambetta in the leadership of the largest portion of the Republican party. I do not think he is hostile to Duclerc, but if he attains to anything at all near to Gambetta's position, Duclerc will only hold office during his sufferance. Probably neither would be willing to serve under the other.

If, as seems likely, the death of Gambetta leads to the decay of the spirit of revenge upon Germany, this will (as I have said before) increase the danger of all other Powers from the restlessness of France, and will in particular increase our difficulties in Egypt. If any modification of the arrangement of the Law of Liquidation is proposed or any other step taken which can give France a pretext for interfering in defence of French interests, we may have trouble. If we leave a door open for French intrusion, France may get so far in, that her amour-propre may force her to push on at all risks.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 16, 1883.

Prince Napoleon's Proclamation and his arrest have put all other things out of people's heads here for the moment. He was arrested, very roughly I understand, at 3 o'clock, as he drove up to his own door in the Avenue d'Autin, and his papers were examined and seized in the usual way on such occasions. There is not so far any appearance of his having anything behind to back up

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The Proclamation. It is said that he has rendered himself liable to very severe penalties as a conspirator against the State. What seems to be more generally expected is that the law enabling the Government to exile the members of any family that has reigned in France will be revived. If it is to be the beginning of political proscriptions, in however mild a form, it will be a calamity and perhaps a prelude to revolutionary times and ways.

The only good I can see in it is that it may divert attention here from Egypt, for the French were getting excessively cross with us on that subject. I should not have been surprised if Duclerc's Declaration and Yellow Book had been much more unfriendly than they are. The Declaration was, it seems, received with icy coldness in the Chamber. It is creditable to Duclerc that he did not fish for a cheer by a Chauvin wind up, as Freycinet used to do. But if Duclerc had been popular and had been thought to be firm in the saddle, he would have met with a better reception.

Prince Napoleon's Proclamation did not in reality cause any great commotion or alarm, as it was obvious that he had no backing of importance; but it served as an excuse to introduce a preposterous Exclusion Bill directed against the members of all ex-reigning families. This measure created great indignation amongst the French Conservatives, more especially the provision which deprived the Princes of their Commissions in the army, and in consequence of modifications which were introduced. Duclerc and his colleagues resigned office, giving place to an ephemeral Cabinet under M. Fallières,[307] subsequently President of the Republic.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Feb. 2, 1883.

Everything is at sixes and sevens here, and no one knows to whom to turn in the

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absolute dearth of any man of decided superiority since the death of Gambetta. It is curious that he should come to be regretted as the mainstay of Conservatism.

I send you by the messenger a despatch from Villiers[308] which seems to me to give a very clear and correct account of the state of feeling in the French Army. I don't think it at all overrates the dissatisfaction that exists among the officers. For my own part I do not believe there is any organized movement, Legitimist, Orleanist, or Bonapartist, actually in preparation at this moment. But I do see that confidence in the duration of the present institutions is diminishing, and that, as a cause or a

[307] Clément Armand Fallières (1841 – 1931) was a French statesman who was President of France from 1906 to 1913. From 7 August 1882 to 20 February 1883 he was Minister of the Interior, and for a month (from 29 January 1883) was Prime Minister. In March 1899 he was elected President of the Senate, and retained that position until January 1906, when he was chosen by a union of the groups of the Left in both chambers as candidate for the Presidency of the Republic and elected.

[308] Col. the Hon. George Villiers, Military Attaché at Paris. (LN). Colonel the Hon. George Patrick Hyde Villiers (1847 – 1892) was a prominent British military officer and diplomat who served as the Military Attaché at Paris during a critical period in the late 19th century. He was the third son of the 4th Earl of Clarendon. He had a series of prestigious Military Attaché postings: Berlin: 1880 – 1881; St. Petersburg: 1881; Paris from 1882 to 1887.

> consequence, dissatisfaction and disquietude are increasing. Something subversive may happen with very little warning beforehand.
>
> Barring accidents, the probabilities seem to be that the present Ministry may last about ten days, and that then Jules Ferry may come in for some months and *après lui le déluge.*[309] Challemel Lacour is talked of as Minister for Foreign Affairs. As a diplomatist you know him better than I do. The little social (so to call it) intercourse I have had with him has been pleasant enough, but he has the reputation of being irritable and cross-grained.
>
> The proceedings against the Princes are bad enough in themselves, and they are of evil augury. The Reds having once tasted blood, may become ravenous for more, and who can say where they may look for the next victims?
>
> Notwithstanding the critical state of home affairs, the French papers find room occasionally for bitter articles against us about Egypt. The great point to attend to, in order to prevent the smouldering irritations bursting into a blaze, seems to be to avoid touching the Law of Liquidation, or the administrations of the Daira and Domains. Any alteration, however great an improvement it might be in reality, would give rise to unlimited suspicion and dissatisfaction here.

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The Prince of Wales had intended visiting Paris about this period, but in consequence of the violent feelings aroused by the Exclusion Bill and of the bitterness of the extremists against constituted dynasties, he was advised to keep away.

> Their newspapers would have no scruple in attacking any personage, however exalted, whom they believed to be opposed to their deplorable bill. Indeed, the more exalted the personage, and the more entitled to respect, the greater might be their scurrility. Nothing can be more lamentable than all this, and I am obliged to add that the general feeling towards England is not particularly cordial. Taking everything into consideration, I have, though very reluctantly, come to the conclusion that it is my duty to report to Your Royal Highness that I cannot feel quite sure that if you were at Paris something unpleasant might not happen, or that at least very improper language might not be used by a portion of the press; and I cannot conceal from Your Royal Highness that the present moment is far from an opportune one for a visit.[310]

The increasing bad feeling produced a complaint from Lord Granville, who considered that "it is hard upon me, that being probably, of all English public men, the one who for various reasons is most attached to France, we should always have such difficult moments to pass when I am in office."

After all the fuss that had been made about Prince Napoleon's Proclamation, it came as a distinct anti-climax that his arrest was discovered to be illegal. He was accordingly released, and nothing more was heard of him; meanwhile it was generally believed that General

[309] After him the deluge.
[310] Lyons, Feb. 1883. (LN)

Billot,[311] the late Minister of War in the Duclerc Government, had actually made all preparations for a *pronunciamento* in favour of the

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Duc d'Aumale, and that his project was only foiled on account of the want of enterprise shown by the Orleans princes themselves. General Billot was superseded by a certain General Thibaudin,[312] who was considered to be especially well adapted for the purpose of carrying out the dirty work in connection with the dismissal of the Princes from the army.

After a period of much uncertainty, during which for more than a month there was no one at the French Foreign Office to whom the Foreign Diplomatists could speak on foreign affairs, or even any subordinate who could express an opinion or give an instruction, M. Fallières was got rid of, and a new administration was formed under M. Jules Ferry, M. Challemel Lacour becoming Foreign Minister.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Feb. 20, 1883.

> I suppose Ferry must have made his Ministry by to-morrow or the next day. I will not bore you with the innumerable conjectures as to who his colleagues will be. It is said Thibaudin is to be kept as Minister of War, long enough at all events to take the measures against the Princes which a more respectable general would shrink from.
>
> I only hope the new Ministry will not try to divert public attention from home difficulties by a 'spirited' Foreign or Colonial Policy. Egypt is always a source of trouble ready to their hand, if they want to produce excitement. I think the great thing is to avoid touching the Law of Liquidation or the administration of the securities for the loans; in short, to avoid giving them any pretext for saying that the material interests of France are injured, and the guarantee she held weakened. But it is premature to speculate on these matters in ignorance of who the incoming Ministers may be and what policy they will adopt.

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The urbane M. Challemel Lacour, in his new capacity as Foreign Minister, was not likely to begin by making gushing protestations of deep affection for England, but Lord Lyons was disposed to consider this a hopeful symptom. "I know by long experience that ardent professions of love for England on the part of an incoming Minister are not to be trusted to as good signs." Mr. Gladstone was in Paris at the time and paid visits to the President, Challemel Lacour, and Jules Ferry; but much to the relief of the Ambassador, he avoided the subjects of Egypt and of Commercial Treaties, and no harm was done.

The Ferry administration possessed the advantage of attracting a better class of French politician than had lately been the case, and M. Waddington now reappeared upon the scene.

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[311] Jean-Baptiste Billot (1828 – 1907) was a French general and politician. His military and political career were marred when he was implicated by Émile Zola of conspiracy to frame Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer, for espionage in an 1898 open letter *J'Accuse!* In it Zola accused General Billot of having held in his hands absolute proof of Dreyfus's innocence and covering it up.
[312] Jean Thibaudin (1822 – 1905) was a French general and politician of the French Third Republic. He was involved in the colonization of Madagascar and was Minister of War (Jan. – Oct. 1883) in the government of Jules Ferry.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
March 6, 1883.

Jules Ferry appears to have hinted to Waddington that he would be offered the Embassy in London, if he voted with the Government on the interpellation in the Senate on the Decree putting the Orleans Princes *en non-activité.*[313] The Embassy at Vienna has, I understand, been actually offered to and refused by him. He would not, under any circumstances, take any Embassy but London, and moreover he would in no case serve a Government of which Thibaudin was a member.

Waddington asked Rivers Wilson if he could not suggest some offer which might be made to France in order to place her once more in cordial union with England in Egypt. There is, moreover, a notice in the Havas,[314] purporting to come from London, but very likely put in more or less on authority here, to the effect that France cannot, and England ought to, take the

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initiative of proposing something. I entirely agree with you that the matter had better lie still for the moment. I suppose you don't want to make any such concession to France as would satisfy her, and certainly matters would not be mended by our making another unsuccessful proposal. I hope Waddington spoke entirely on his own hook and not in concert with Challemel Lacour. It would be intolerable if Challemel Lacour tried the system of indirect irresponsible communications, the delight of Duclerc, which produced so much annoyance and inconvenience, and in fact rendered any real understanding impossible.

Jules Ferry is believed to be contemplating a conversion of the 5 per cents. If he makes the attempt, it will bind him over to keep things quiet abroad and at home, in order to secure the success of the operation.

It is very provoking that the French should have put down the New Hebrides among the places to which to transport their relapsed criminals.

Lord Granville, who owned that he had nothing to propose about Egypt, even if he wished to do so, was not at all enthusiastic at the prospect of Waddington coming to London, "I am not particularly anxious to have Waddington instead of Tissot, he would be burning to distinguish himself, and very *agissant*."[315] Lord Granville's fears of Waddington's activity were founded upon the fact that he had been selected as the French Representative at the Coronation at Moscow, and that, therefore, he would find it impossible to settle down quietly at the London Embassy without burning to distinguish himself, after "flourishing about Europe."

[313] Out of action.
[314] The *Agence Havas* was the world's first news agency, which eventually evolved into the modern-day *Agence France-Presse* (AFP). Founded by Charles-Louis Havas in 1835, it was the dominant source of international news in France during the 19th and early 20th centuries. (*Google Gemini*)
[315] Active.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 23, 1883.

It is whispered, at least by Waddington's friends, that it is intended that his special Embassy to

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Russia shall be a prelude to his becoming regular Ambassador in London: that the idea is that he shall offer a Commercial Treaty to us; that he shall by this means enlist the support of some members of Parliament and influential manufacturers in England, and that then he shall obtain concessions for us about Egypt, on the plea that, without such concessions, the Chambers could not be brought to ratify a Commercial Treaty favourable to us. The statements in the newspapers about the assumption of Commercial negotiations between England and France are stated to be *ballons d'essai*[316] to see how the wind sets with regard to such a policy.

I just give you all this for what it may be worth. I doubt very much whether formal negotiations or a stirring French Ambassador in London would be likely to lead just now to cordiality between France and England. The French could hardly do anything that would satisfy us about trade, and we should find it very difficult to do anything that would satisfy them about Egypt. My hope would rather be that we might glide back into cordiality by avoiding critical questions.

In talking to me about his Embassy to Russia, Waddington mentioned, amongst its advantages, that it would bring him into contact with important personages of various countries, and he said he should probably visit Berlin and Vienna on his way home.

With Challemel Lacour at the Foreign Office there did not appear to be much prospect of "gliding back into cordiality," judging by the following account of an interview between him and some members of the Rothschild family who were frequently employed as intermediaries between the two Governments.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 30, 1883.

Alphonse de Rothschild[317] and his cousin Sir Nathaniel came to see me yesterday and

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told me that they had had an interview with Challemel Lacour on the subject of the proposed sale of the Domain Lands in Egypt. They told me that they found Challemel Lacour extremely sore about the whole Egyptian Question. He appears to have distinctly refused to forward in any way the sale of the Domain and to have alleged as his reason that he would not help to do away with any board of management in which a Frenchman still had a seat; that this would tend to diminish the number of Frenchmen holding influential positions in Egypt, while his object was to increase, or

[316] Trial balloons.

[317] Mayer Alphonse James Rothschild (1827 – 1905), was a French financier, vineyard owner, art collector, philanthropist, racehorse owner/breeder and a member of the Rothschild banking family of France. Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild, 1st Baron Rothschild (1840 – 1915) was a British banker and politician. (*See footnote on page 91*)

> at all events, to maintain the existing number. As indeed might have been foreseen, he was very far from desiring to facilitate any financial or other arrangements required by England. We shall no doubt find the French very inconvenient and embarrassing in Egypt at every turn. I hope they will not be dangerous, unless some disregard of positive international engagements affecting French interests gives the Chauvinists the pretext they are looking out for, and drives the sensible men into a corner, in face of their public declarations and of popular irritation.
>
> I understand Louise Michel has been arrested. The Government may gain ground by showing vigour, but unless it finds means of convincing the officers in the army that it will secure their position against the Radical endeavours to undermine it, things may end in that fatal solution, a military *pronunciamento*.

The arrest of Louise Michel[318] had taken place as the result of one of the numerous riots which occurred at Paris in the spring of 1883; they were not of much importance, but possessed some significance as being the first appearance of disturbances in the streets since the suppression of the Commune, and were due largely to the distress caused by bad trade, and to artificially stimulated expenditure on building, and other modes of finding employment. The result of the latter expedient was to raise the price of labour artificially and

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consequently to drive manufactures to other places, thus creating unemployment in Paris itself. In connection with these disturbances there was one singular peculiarity in the attitude of the so-called Conservative classes. Not only the Royalist and Imperial parties, but a considerable number of the richer people who were without any strong political bias, sympathized rather with the people in the streets than with the Government. The upper classes were, in fact, so dissatisfied with the existing state of things that they appeared willing to run the risk of seeing the Republican Government discredited and ultimately overthrown by popular tumult.

The following letter is an admirable illustration of the spirit in which the French viewed all English action in Egypt. Lord Dufferin, in the course of a despatch, had spoken in most appreciative terms of the friendly attitude adopted towards him by M. de Raindre,[319] the French Agent and Consul-General at Cairo, and the British Government naturally supposed that it would be agreeable to the French Government if the despatch were communicated to them. Lord Lyons, however, who was much better acquainted with French opinion, thought otherwise.

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[318] Louise Michel (1830 – 1905), also known by her nickname of Enjolras, was a French teacher, writer, poet, philosopher, Communard, and anarchist. A major figure in the Paris Commune, where she was militarily and politically involved and was one of the most famous representatives of the role played by women in the Paris Commune. She was also a feminist figure and became one of the key personalities of anarchism during her lifetime, a movement she joined after the Commune and profoundly influenced.

[319] Gaston Raindre (1847 – 1927), was a significant French career diplomat who served as the Agent and Consul-General of France in Egypt during a pivotal period of British intervention and the breakdown of the Anglo-French "Dual Control." Raindre was appointed to Cairo at one of the most volatile moments in modern Egyptian history—the aftermath of the 1882 British occupation following the "Urabi Revolt."

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 15, 1883.

> I am rather frightened by the praises given by Dufferin in his despatch of April 29th to the "very correct and loyal attitude of M. de Raindre, the French Agent and Consul-General, and of all the French officials in Egypt." If this despatch came to the knowledge of the French Government or the French public, it might do de Raindre a serious injury, and lead to the

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> immediate substitution for him of an Agent whose attitude would be more correct in the French sense. I am afraid also that the claim Dufferin makes to have considered the interests of the French in the Egyptian service, however true it is, would provoke a howl of contradiction.
>
> I do not mean to imply that Raindre's conduct has been at variance with his instructions. I don't think it is the policy of the French Government at this moment to get up irritating discussions with us on small everyday matters, either in Egypt or in other parts of the world. The French Foreign Office seems to me to be, on the contrary, more conciliatory than usual in its answers respecting such matters. I mark this with satisfaction because I hope that in this way, provided we can avoid irritating controversies, we may return insensibly to satisfactory relations. But we are far enough from such relations in reality at this moment. Challemel Lacour is not given, as you know, to talk about general diplomatic policy, but others do not hesitate to let us understand that while they are civil about small matters, they are only biding their time till an opportunity comes of opposing us in effect with great ones.

The course of affairs in Tonquin had not tended to restore the French to good humour by providing a compensation for their eclipse in Egypt, and the attempt to indulge in Chauvinism on the cheap had turned out to be a costly and unsatisfactory experiment. Had it not been for the provocations of the foreign press, it is possible that the spirited Colonial Policy with regard to Tonquin, Madagascar, etc., would have been abandoned quietly; but it was found intolerable to endure the daily administration of threats, ridicule, and supercilious advice showered from abroad. As it was, these expeditions did serve one useful purpose, namely, that of temporarily diverting attention from Egypt.

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The reputation of the French Republic was not enhanced by a most discreditable incident which occurred at Paris in the autumn. The young King of Spain[320] who had been visiting some of the European capitals, arrived at Paris on September 29, shortly after having been created by the German Emperor an Honorary Colonel of an Uhlan regiment at Strasbourg. On the strength of this honorary distinction he was met by a howling mob, which proceeded to demonstrate its patriotism by insults such as have seldom been offered to any foreign potentate, and for which the President of the Republic was forced to make an apology on the following day.

[320] In 1883 the King of Spain was Alfonso XII (1857 – 1885) who reigned from 1874 – 85.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Oct. 5, 1883.

> I do not remember any moment at which affairs here have appeared to me so gloomy. The more I learn of the proceedings of the French authorities, no less than those of the mob, the more unpardonable do they appear. I have never felt the same repugnance (and I have had my trials in this way) to the people with whom I have to deal. It is a comfort to contrast the bearing of the King of Spain with that of His Majesty's so called hosts. Jules Ferry himself appears to have behaved decorously. I will forbear from speculating on the ultimate effect of this deplorable affair on French institutions. So far as I can see, Ferry and Wilson both calculate on obtaining the advantage in a battle in the Chambers, if they put off the fight till the session opens on the 23rd. In the meantime, decency (if decency were at all taken into account here at this moment) would seem to require that Thibaudin should resign or be dismissed.
>
> Our own political questions with the French Government do not seem in a much more hopeful state than the general political condition of things here.

Not content with having by carelessness allowed the King of Spain to be insulted, the French Government

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prevented a correct and complete report of President Grévy's apology from being published in the *Journal Officiel*, this action being on a par with the whole disgraceful proceedings. As, however, the only alternative to the existing Government appeared to be a thoroughgoing Intransigent Cabinet, and there was no telling what the latter might do both at home and abroad, it was hoped that Jules Ferry and his colleagues would succeed in holding their own.

In the autumn, Challemel Lacour, who had become unpopular owing to the unsatisfactory campaign in Tonquin, resigned office, and his place at the Foreign Office was taken by Jules Ferry himself. Towards the end of November there arrived the news of Hicks Pasha's[321] disaster in the Soudan, and although this event was not by any means unwelcome to the French, the chances of a speedy termination of the British occupation of Egypt naturally grew more remote.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Nov. 23, 1883.

I suppose there can be no hope that the disaster which has overwhelmed Hicks's army is less serious than is reported. It seems to be a grievous misfortune which has come at a most inopportune moment for us. It is far from causing sorrow to our friends here.

I quite understand your not being keen to arbitrate between France and China, and I don't think the French will be willing to accept the arbitration of anybody. What they understand

[321] Colonel William Hicks (1830 – 1883), also known as Hicks Pasha, was a British army officer who joined the Bombay Army in 1849, and served through the Indian Rebellion of 1857. After the close of the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882, he entered the Khedive's service and was made a Pasha. Hicks was commander-in-chief of an expeditionary force to Kordofan with orders to crush the Mahdi, who in January 1883 had captured El-Obeid, the capital of that province. His force was ambushed in a forest and he was killed, being the last officer to fall.

by our good offices, is that we should help them to carry all their points against the Chinese. It is supposed that the Committee will press on the Government a larger vote for Tonquin than the Government has asked for.

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In the mean time things at home are looking gloomy in France. There is likely to be a stagnation of trade and generally much distress during the winter. People of all classes are getting irritable, and seem to seek to vent their irritation on foreign Powers. Add to this that the depression and pusillanimity which followed 1870 – 1871, seem to be giving place to the former overweening opinion of the strength of France and consequently to Chauvinism.

I wrote a despatch to you by the last messenger as to the effect the lowering the wine duties for Spain would have here. I am never quite at ease when I think of our holding Most Favoured Nation treatment at the pleasure of the French. The lowest class who are gaining power are certainly not Free Traders.

In consequence of the Soudan disaster the Egyptian Government became anxious to call in the Turks to their assistance, and this project excited a strong feeling in France against the admission of the Sultan's troops, or of any Turkish fighting men into Egypt, to take part in the defence against the Mahdi,[322] that feeling being founded on the old ground of danger to the French position in Tunis and Algeria. But, for the same reason, the French were disposed to throw a heavy responsibility upon England for taking precautions that the Mahdi should be effectually stopped somewhere or other. Everything, in fact, that England did in Egypt was wrong in French eyes, and there was a fresh outburst over an arrangement made between Lesseps and the English shipowners with regard to the Suez Canal.

In January, 1884, the British Government decided definitely upon the evacuation of the Soudan, and Gordon[323] was despatched to carry out the operation.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 19, 1884.

> I do not know that in the main any marked change in public opinion in France about Egypt has taken place since I wrote ten days ago; but as the state of things there

[322] The Mahdi is a messianic figure in Islamic belief. He is comparable to the Christian concept of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Jewish concept of Mashiach ben David. The Mahdi is said to be a descendant of Muhammad and is believed to appear at the *End of Times*, shortly before Jesus returns (in Islamic belief), to rid the world of evil and injustice. In the 1880s, there was Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Fahal (1843 – 1885) a Sudanese religious and political leader. In 1881, he claimed to be the Mahdi and led a war against Egyptian rule in Sudan, which culminated in a remarkable victory over them in the Siege of Khartoum. He created a vast Islamic state extending from the Red Sea to Central Africa

[323] Major General Charles George Gordon (1833 – 1885), also known as Chinese Gordon, Gordon Pasha and Gordon of Khartoum, was a British Army officer and administrator. He saw action in the Crimean War as an army officer and made his military reputation in China. When the revolt broke out in the Sudan, led by a Muslim religious leader and self-proclaimed Mahdi, Gordon was sent to Khartoum with instructions to secure the evacuation of loyal soldiers and civilians and to depart with them. He remained behind and was besieged for almost a year. He was killed two days before a relief party arrived.

remains unchanged for the better or becomes changed for the worse, excitement and reproaches against England increase. A catastrophe with regard to the garrison of Khartoum or that of Sinkat,[324] or any massacre of Europeans, would probably produce a violent outcry against us, of a much more intense character than the present general upbraiding as to our allowing the advance of the Soudan towards civilization to be stopped, and the slave trade to be revived.

I am told confidentially that Barrère,[325] the French Agent at Cairo, writes to urge his Government to decide upon some distinct line of policy, in view of the present crisis. His own idea would seem to be to ingratiate himself with the Egyptians at the expense of the English, to lead them to attribute all the present misfortunes to England and to teach them to look to France for ultimate deliverance from them. I hear that he rates Baring's ability very highly, but writes very disparagingly of the other Englishmen in office in Egypt. One of his topics in decrying England is said to be the sum charged by her on the Egyptian Treasury for the occupying troops. He is said not to be averse to touching the Law of Liquidation, because he conceives that, if this is done, France will get her finger into the pie again.

Tonquin is, at this moment, secondary to Egypt in interest here, but the French are getting impatient for news from Admiral Courbet.

Nothing particularly critical has yet taken place in the Chamber.

Lord Granville's reply seems to show that General Gordon was almost as great an optimist as himself.

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Jan. 19, 1884.

Many thanks for your important private letter about Egypt. The information may be of use to Baring.

Barrère is a very clever fellow, and has persuaded Baring that he is very friendly.

Gordon went off yesterday, in a very good humour, determined to help us in carrying out our policy of evacuation in the best manner.
He is wonderfully optimistic, with a great contempt for the Mahdi and disbelief in Arab fanaticism or love of real fighting. He is not much afraid of a massacre. I trust he may be right.

[324] A small town in eastern Sudan about 96 kilometres from the Port Sudan on the Red Sea.
[325] Camille Barrère (Pierre Eugène Camille Barrère, 1851 – 1940) was the French agent at Cairo in the 1880s. He was a former Communard who had taken refuge in London, became secretary to Waddington after the amnesty of 1879, and was appointed *ministre plénipotentiaire* in 1882, before being placed in charge of the Consulate General at Alexandria in 1883. He was the French Ambassador to Italy from 1897 to 1924. Barrère also was a key figure in arranging the 1915 secret Treaty of London between Italy and the Triple Entente, which resulted in Italy abandoning its Triple Alliance partners of Germany and Austro-Hungary during the First World War.

CHAPTER XVI. ANGLOPHOBIA. (1883-1885)

A fresh disaster in the Soudan—Baker Pasha's[326] defeat—encouraged the idea that these reverses were symptoms of weakness on the part of England, and gave France a reason for desiring to interfere, and a locus standi for asserting a claim to do so.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 11, 1884.

> The large majority obtained by the Government against the coalition of the extreme Right and the extreme Left on Paul Bert's[327] extravagant proposals relative to the salaries of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, has strengthened their hands and has given some confidence to the *Union Républicaine* Party, on which they mainly rely. They also succeeded in defeating a very mischievous motion made by Clémenceau in the Committee of 44 to send a deputation to Anzin[328] in order to inquire into, or more properly to foment the troubles in the Anzin coal districts. Nevertheless, the state of the country and of Paris in particular is far from comfortable. The distress of the workmen, and the folly and unreasonableness of their demands and expectations are

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> on the increase. I send you by this messenger a good despatch by Crowe[329] on the violent cry for protection from the competition of foreign workmen as well as that of foreign goods, which has been one of the consequences.
>
> I am afraid all this does not tend to make the Government more conciliatory on foreign affairs. They are hourly expecting to hear of the fall of Bac-Ninh,[330] and if they are quite successful there, they are only too likely to turn their thoughts to getting a little glory out of the Egyptian question, as well as out of the Madagascar, Congo, and other matters in which they are more or less opposed to England.

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[326] Valentine Baker (1827 – 1887) also known as Baker Pasha, was a British general and the younger brother of Sir Samuel Baker. He was most notable for his participation in the Russo-Turkish War (1877 – 1878) on the side of the Ottoman Empire. Baker's career in the British army was ended by a scandal. He was arrested on a charge of indecent assault upon a young woman in a railway carriage. The matter went to trial where Baker offered no defence, and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £500. He was then dismissed from the service. Later he entered the service of the Ottoman Army and was promoted to command a division of infantry. He was then offered a command in the Egyptian police and when war broke out he led 3,500 men to relieve Tokar in Eastern Sudan but his force was annihilated. A second British force under Sir Gerald Graham arrived and defeated the rebels on 29th February 1884. Baker remained in command of the Egyptian police until his death in 1887.

[327] Paul Bert (1833 – 1886) was a French zoologist, physiologist and politician. From 14 November 1881 to 30 January 1882 he was Minister of Education and Worship in Gambetta's short-lived cabinet. In 1881 he created a great sensation with a lecture on modern Catholicism, delivered in a Paris theatre, in which he poured ridicule on the fables and follies of the chief religious tracts and handbooks that circulated especially in the south of France. Bert was unexpectedly named resident general of the French Republic in Annam and Tonkin on 31 January 1886 and died in Hanoi in November 1886,

[328] Anzin is a commune in the Nord department, Hauts-de-France, France. It lies on the Scheldt about 1.5 miles northwest of Valenciennes.

[329] Sir Joseph Crowe, Commercial Attaché at the Paris Embassy. (LN) (See footnote on page 196)

[330] A city in Northern Vietnam, captured by French forces from The Black Flag army, a splinter group of a banditry and mercenary group that had crossed the border from China in 1865.

So far as we are concerned, the effect the reconciliation between Russia and Germany has had upon the French is not good. So long as they had any hopes of a quarrel between Germany and Russia, they felt bound to reserve their strength in order to take advantage of it, and to cultivate good relations with other Powers, in order to secure at least their non-interference. Now they have given up the hope of a break between Russia and Germany, and are at the same time confident that all the Continental Powers are determined on peace. They think therefore that they may expect to be *tête-à-tête* with us and to be free to act as suits them in affairs in which we are concerned.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
March 12, 1884.

Your letters are most interesting, though not comforting. The difficulty of keeping on friendly terms with France is not to be underrated.

I await with almost equal interest the news which we shall probably get this evening from (illegible) and that which I suppose will come in a few days from Bac-Ninh.

I am afraid victory will make the French Government very difficult to deal with; on the other hand, a defeat, which is not likely, will make the Chinese intolerable.

Our own troubles, especially in the Soudan, are great. If things could settle there, I

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am confident that Egypt would soon recover the state in which she was before Hicks's defeat, and this notwithstanding all the intrigues which are going on there.

Bismarck says he shall give us no trouble about the Law of Liquidation, but that other nations will. What will be the best way of approaching the French Government when we have made up our own minds?

As to protection, it will create a very angry feeling here. It will ruin the French and it will make us the monopolists of the neutral markets of the world so long as we can keep at peace.

The Egyptian blister has diverted public attention from Merv.[331] The question was treated in excellent speeches in the Lords, but the debate was dull and flat.

We do not make you a very handsome present in Mohrenheim.[332] He is like a diplomatist on the stage.

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[331] Merv was a place of profound geopolitical significance; its annexation by Russia was the defining Central Asian crisis of that year. Merv was an ancient oasis city and one of the most significant settlements on the Silk Road, with over 2,500 years of history. Known as "Merv the Queen of the World," it was at its prime a centre for commerce, religion, and culture, rivalling cities like Damascus and Baghdad as a major Islamic urban centre. It is located in what is today southern Turkmenistan, on the Murghab River delta. It was annexed by the Russians in 1884, leading to tension with Britain as it was perceived to be a gateway to British India *via* Afghanistan. (*Claude* AI)

[332]Baron Arthur Pavlovich von Mohrenheim (1824 – 1906) was a diplomat of the Russian Empire who served as ambassador to France from 1884 to 1897 and played a leading role in arranging the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Baron Mohrenheim, a diplomatist of a very conventional type, had just been transferred to Paris from the Russian Embassy in London, and was generally credited with strong anti-English sentiments.

On the question of the financial condition of Egypt, the British Government finally decided to propose a European Conference, and the decision was communicated to the French Government. As was only to be expected, the English proposal produced a conflict of opinion in France. Some approved of calling in Europe generally, but others denounced the proposal as a new proof of the treachery of England, who, according to them, was bound to treat with France alone, and called loudly upon the French Government to refuse to go into a Conference on equal terms with other Powers. All seemed to think, however, that the moment had come for France to reassume a position equal with that of England, if not superior to it. The

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attitude of the French Government itself was more moderate. Jules Ferry accepted the Conference "in principle," and endeavoured to show that two absolutely false notions prevailed in England which seemed to be the great obstacles to an understanding between the two countries. One was that if the English withdrew their troops from Egypt, France would send hers in; the other, that France sought to re-establish the Control.

The position in which Gordon now found himself in Khartoum began to cause Her Majesty's Government serious misgivings, and many expedients were suggested for relieving Ministers from their embarrassment. Amongst them appears a serio-comic proposition from the Baron de Billing,[333] a well-known figure in Anglo-French society.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 4, 1884.

> I send you copies of a letter written to me by Baron de Billing yesterday and of a memo annexed to it. I don't know what you will think of the offer to rescue Gordon which they contain, but I deem it right to lay it before you. Billing made it to me verbally yesterday, and I begged him to put it in writing. The inclosed papers are the result.
>
> Billing did not tell me who the persons were by whom the rescue was to be effected, but I understand that they were Arab Sheikhs or something of that kind. Apparently they are in Paris, for he professed to go to consult them before he sent me the memo.
>
> He says you have known him from a boy.
>
> "*Il se porte garant de l'honorabilité des personnes en jeu*." For my part "*Je ne me porte garant de rien*" in the matter.[334]

Billing insisted much on the importance of his receiving a speedy answer.

[333] No information on Baron de Billing has been found by direct search or use of AI program *Claude*.
[334] He vouches for the integrity of the people involved. I vouch for nothing/

MEMO.

"Gordon Pasha sera remis aux autorités egyptiennes ou anglaises à un des ports de la Mer Rouge ou aux avant-postes de l'armée anglo-egyptienne moyennant:
(Gordon Pasha will be handed over to the Egyptian or British authorities at one of the Red Sea ports or at an Anglo-Egyptian army outpost upon it.

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1. *le paiement immédiat par Lord Lyons d'une somme de deux mille livres sterling à une personne désignée par le Baron de Billing, ancien chargé d'affaires de France à Munich, Tunis et Stockholm.* (the immediate payment by Lord Lyons of the sum of two thousand pounds sterling to a person designated by Baron de Billing, former French chargé d'affaires in Munich, Tunis and Stockholm)

2. *Le versement d'une somme de 48,000 livres sterling au credit du Baron de Billing chez Messrs. Coutts, ses banquiers ordinaires, le jour même où parviendra à Londres la nouvelle officielle de la remise de Gordon Pasha entre les mains des autorités anglo-egyptiennes.* (The payment of a sum of 48,000 pounds sterling to the credit of Baron de Billing at Messrs. Coutts, his usual bankers, on the very day that the official news of the handing over of Gordon Pasha into the hands of the Anglo-Egyptian authorities reaches London.)

N.B.—1. *Un compte détaillé sera rendu à Lord Lyons de l'emploi des deux milles livres sterling immédiatement exigibles.* (A detailed account will be made to Lord Lyons of the use of the two thousand pounds sterling immediately due,)

2 *Gordon Pasha devra prendre l'engagement écrit de quitter sur le champ l'Egypte et de s'en tenir éloigné pendant une période de 10 ans. (Je crois qu'il sera possible de faire modifier cette dernière prétention qui semble bien peu pratique.)*
Le Baron de Billing se porte garant vis-à-vis de Lord Lyons de l'honorabilité des personnes en jeu, et il ajoute que vû son expérience de l'Afrique, il croit à de sérieuses chances de succés. (Gordon Pasha will have to sign a written undertaking to leave Egypt immediately and stay away from it for a period of 10 years. (I believe it will be possible to amend this last requirement, which seems rather impractical.) Baron de Billing vouches for Lord Lyons regarding the integrity of the individuals involved, and adds that, given his experience of Africa, he believes there is a strong chance of success.)

Un permis de séjour en blanc pour l'Egypte sera remis au Baron de Billing pour un Musulman à désigner par lui. (A blank residence permit for Egypt will be issued to Baron de Billing for a Muslim to be designated by him.)

(*Très important*.)

In spite of Lord Granville's life-long acquaintance with the Baron, the proposal (which bears a striking resemblance to some of the incidents in the Dreyfus case) was declined, and nothing more was heard of him in connection with the rescue of Gordon.

The French military operations in the Far East were terminated temporarily by a Treaty with China, concluded in May, under which the Protectorate of France over Tonquin and Annam

was recognized, and there was some uncertainty at first as to how the commercial terms would be interpreted. When the Prince of Wales,

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who was then in Paris, called upon President Grévy, the latter dilated effusively upon the satisfaction which all nations must feel at the new opening of trade to them in Tonquin and Annam. On the other hand, the *Temps*, a newspaper of considerable authority, talked of the *ouverture au commerce exclusif de la France des Provinces de l'Empire celeste limitrophes de nos possessions de l'Indo-Chine.*[335] "I have observed," Lord Lyons wrote sadly, "no symptoms lately in France of anything like a decently liberal commercial spirit." Nor when M. Jules Ferry was congratulated upon the Tonquin settlement, did that statesman let fall any hint of an intention to open to the rest of the world the commercial advantages which France had secured for herself. In fact, the chief result of the French success in Tonquin seemed to be, that, having at all events, got rid temporarily of this difficulty, a more unconciliatory line of policy than ever would be adopted as far as Egypt was concerned.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 27, 1884.

> You may have observed that, contrary to my usual habit, I have been sending you lately a great many extracts from French newspapers. My reason is of a very painful kind. I have thought it necessary to give you specimens of the ill will towards England, the suspicions of her, and the irritability respecting her which seem to become more and more prevalent here. To these unpleasant symptoms I might add that exclusive and illiberal commercial views and extreme Protectionist ideas are in the ascendant: and that thus the spirited Colonial Policy now in vogue, becomes a danger instead of an advantage to foreign commerce, which it might be if it opened new areas to the trade of all nations.

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> The Ferry Government is wafted along by the pleasant breezes from Tonquin, but they must be on the look out for squalls as they near the revision of the Constitution and the discussion of the Budget of 1885.
>
> The *Gaulois* is hardly looked upon here as a serious paper, but the calumnies upon Sir J. Drummond Hay[336] which it professes to have derived from a report made, I suppose *viva voce*, by Ordega[337] to Ferry, are too bad. Menabrea says that the Italian Minister

[335] Opening to the exclusive trade of France the Provinces of the Celestial Empire bordering on our possessions of Indo-China.
[336] Sir John Hay Drummond Hay (1816 – 1893) was the United Kingdom's Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Morocco in the 19th century. His involvement in the country lasted more than forty years. In 1856, he negotiated and signed the Anglo-Moroccan Accords, a general treaty and a commercial convention with the Moroccan government. In 1861 he was promoted to the rank of Minister Resident. His further promotion to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary took place in 1872, and to that of Envoy Extraordinary in 1880. His success was aided by his facility with languages.
[337] French Minister at Tangier. (LN). Louis-Justin Ordega (1840 – 1892) was a prominent French diplomat who served as the Minister Plenipotentiary to Morocco, based in Tangier, from 1882 to 1885. He is best remembered for his aggressive "forward policy," which aimed to expand French influence in Morocco at a time when European powers were scrambling for control in North Africa. Ordega's bold tactics eventually backfired. His manoeuvres alarmed other European powers—

at Tangier is a man of herculean strength and fierce temper, and that he is as likely as not to wring Ordega's neck if he catches him. *Libre à lui de le faire*.[338]

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
May 28, 1884.

We must be very clumsy to invite so much indignation in France and at the same time to run the risk of being turned out next month for being so subservient to her.

Waddington seems in earnest to bring about a good understanding, but our press, over which the Government has absolutely no control, will be most offensive, until the vote of censure against the Conference, which is almost sure to be brought on, is decided one way or the other.

It will require all Salisbury's want of caution to try to come in upon a quarrel with all Europe upon the Egyptian question.

The Egyptian policy of the Gladstone Government,[339] subsequently to the successful campaign of 1882, never met with much favour in any quarter in England, but it was not surprising, on the whole, that Lord Granville should be pained by French hostility, since nothing whatever had been done to warrant it. Had we behaved ill to France, there might have been a chance of returning to favour by altering our procedure; as it was, there was no

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reasonable ground of offence whatever, and therefore the prospect of restoring friendly relations appeared to be all the more remote.

Lord Hartington,[340] then a prominent member of the Gladstone Government, was in Paris at the beginning of June, and Lord Granville seems to have been much alarmed as to the language which he might use with reference to Egypt in conversation with French Ministers. Lord Hartington was probably not in the least desirous of conversing with French Ministers upon Egypt or upon any other subject, and wished to go i*ncognito*, "as he was constantly in the habit of doing;" but it was represented to him that unless he called upon Jules Ferry it would be believed that he was engaged upon a secret mission, and Lord Lyons was therefore asked to give him some preliminary coaching.

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specifically Britain, Spain, and Germany—who feared France was planning a unilateral takeover of Morocco. (*Google Gemini*)

[338] It is up to him to do so.

[339] William Ewart Gladstone was Prime Minister on four occasions: 3 December 1868 – 17 February 1874; 23 April 1880 – 9 June 1885; 1 February 1886 – 21 July 1886 and 15 August 1892 – 2 March 1894. (*See biographical details in footnote on page 10*)

[340] Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (1833 – 1908) was styled Lord Cavendish of Keighley between 1834 and 1858 and Marquess of Hartington between 1858 and 1891. He was the eldest son of William Cavendish, 2nd Earl of Burlington, who succeeded his cousin as Duke of Devonshire in 1858. Lord Hartington is the title granted to the eldest son of the Duke of Devonshire.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, June 3, 1884.

I sent Lord Hartington your letter yesterday, and I had a long visit from him in the afternoon.

As matters stand, what seems to me most to be dreaded with a view to our relations with France is a vote of the House of Commons censuring an arrangement made by Her Majesty's Government with the French Government. Such a vote, and the debate by which it would be preceded, would, I cannot but fear, have a truly lamentable effect.

I understand that Jules Ferry is having a memorandum on the Finances of Egypt drawn up by Blignières, and that it will dispute the accuracy of Mr. Childers's[341] information and represent that the Finances were in a flourishing condition, and that there were surpluses even during Arabi's rebellion, up to the time at which England took the thing in hand. The memorandum will probably deny there being any necessity for reducing the interest of the debt, if the Finances be properly managed.

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I do not know whether such a reason will be assigned to us, but in fact it seems that the French object to any large loans being guaranteed by England, on account of the lien, so to speak, which it would give England upon Egypt. The French would prefer a simple fresh issue of Unified stock.

In the meantime, the French bondholders are bestirring themselves and protesting against any arrangement being made without their being consulted.

Jules Ferry, however, himself thinks little of any other consideration in comparison with the political success which it would be to him to give France again a political footing in Egypt, and as a means to this, to get a time fixed for the departure of our troops. I do not think he is afraid of much disapproval here of his counter-concession—the engagement that French troops shall not enter Egypt, either on the departure of the English troops or afterwards. Unless the engagement were very formally made and very peculiarly and stringently worded, it would be felt here that it did not amount to much. For though it would preclude the occupation of Egypt by the French to preserve order and promote reforms in the same way we occupy the country now, it would not be interpreted here as preventing France using force to avenge an insult or protect distinct French interests in cases which would constitute a casus belli as regarded any ordinary country.

I do not quite understand the exact position in which stands the suggestion that the Financial question should be first settled by England with the several Powers separately, and then a conference be held for a day or two only to ratify what had already been settled. Does this afford an opening for purely financial negotiations,

[341] Hugh Culling Eardley Childers (1827 – 1896) was a British Liberal statesman of the nineteenth century. He held several ministerial offices including Secretary for War from 28 April 1880 to 16 December 1882; Home Secretary from 6 February 1886 to 25 July 1886 and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 16 December 1882 to 9 June 1885.

and admit of dropping the French political proposals which appear to be so unpopular in England? I believe Jules Ferry is in some tribulation about the difficulties his proposals have met with in England, and is half inclined to be sorry he made them so strong, though I doubt whether Waddington has made him fully aware of the violence of the opposition they encounter in England.

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Generally speaking, I am very unhappy about the growing ill-will between France and England which exists on both sides of the Channel. It is not that I suppose that France has any deliberate intention of going to war with us. But the two nations come into contact in every part of the world. In every part of it questions arise which, in the present state of feeling, excite mutual suspicion and irritation. Who can say, when and where, in this state of things, some local events may not produce a serious quarrel, or some high-handed proceedings of hot-headed officials occasion an actual collision?

The variety and number of questions upon which Lord Lyons was requested to pronounce an opinion have already been commented upon; now he was asked to consider the effect of a hypothetical vote of the House of Commons.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Trentham, June 4, 1884.[342]

Many thanks for your important and pregnant letter. I quite agree that the relations between England and France will be disagreeable if the House of Commons rejects our proposals; but this, though possible, is not so probable as Hartington thinks.

The M.P.'s neither desire a Salisbury administration; still less a dissolution.

But how will our relations be, if we previously break off with France? and what can you suggest for the settlement of the financial difficulties of Egypt, if we obtain no sanction for a change of the Law of Liquidation?

Do you think that the House of Commons would allow us to take the whole debt upon ourselves, in order to save the bondholders? I should be really grateful for your suggestions on this last point.

From the above letter it is plain that Her Majesty's Government had no definite Egyptian

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policy, and were merely stumbling along concerned only, as frequently happens with British Cabinets, with the possible result of a division in the House of Commons. The only evidence of policy was a strong inclination to evade responsibility; to hand it over to a collection of

[342] Lord Granville was a member of the Leveson-Gore family which had several estates including Trentham in North Staffordshire. His father was a younger son of Granville Leveson-Gower, 1st Marquess of Stafford. His father's older brother became the 2nd Marquess and married the Countess of Sutherland. The 2nd Marquess was later made Duke of Sutherland, and was one of the wealthiest men in Britain. Thus Lord Granville was a nephew of the Duke of Sutherland. The 1st Duke of Sutherland remains controversial for his role in the Highland Clearances, when thousands of tenants were evicted and resettled in coastal villages to make way for sheep farming.

Powers; and to fritter away such advantages as had been so hardly won, in the hopeless attempt to recover the goodwill of the French Government.

Lord Lyons's reply was to the effect that nothing would have a worse effect than a bitter debate in the House of Commons followed by the censure of terms agreed upon by the French and English Governments. But as there was no doubt whatever that the French Government intended to take advantage of the Conference to place France in the same position in Egypt as that which she formerly held, a firm policy on the part of Her Majesty's Government might have a better effect than an over-yielding one.

The Egyptian Conference met in London at the end of June and continued its sterile discussions for upwards of a month before finally breaking up, while the tone of the French press grew more and more hostile, and anything in the nature of a concession on the subject of the interest of the debt or on any other matter affecting French material interest was denounced in the fiercest terms. Even the craven British proposals with regard to the limitation of the military occupation were treated with contempt, and no person came in for greater abuse than M. Waddington, who was now established as Ambassador in London, and was constantly denounced for subservience to England, solely because he owned an English name.

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The Conference broke up in August, and the Cabinet, which was now being continually denounced on all sides for its feeble and procrastinating policy, decided upon despatching Lord Northbrook[343] on a special mission to Cairo. Before Lord Northbrook started he had a long interview with Lord Lyons, who did his best to impress upon him the views, interests, and susceptibilities of France, and the great importance of not running counter to them if possible.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Oct. 17, 1884.

> I opened my first conversation with Ferry, the day after my return, with a message from you as to your desire to be on good terms, and to avoid unpleasantness in treating matters between the two countries all over the world. I enlarged upon this theme, and made it as plain to him as I could, without letting the conversation degenerate into recrimination, that if France were perpetually irritating us, we on our side had the means, and should not always be able to abstain from using them, of making ourselves very disagreeable too. The subject was treated in the most friendly way by me, and Ferry was profuse in his acknowledgments to you, and in assurances; but I should have been glad if I could have brought him to more practical advances towards intimacy and good fellowship than I was able to do. However, the conversation may perhaps have done some good.
>
> As regards the Congo Conference, I came away with the impression that there is more or less a tacit, if not very explicit, understanding between France and Germany, in addition to what appears in the Yellow Book; and that this understanding may prove inconvenient to us.

[343] Thomas George Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook (1826 – 1904) was a British Liberal politician and statesman who served as Viceroy of India from 1872 to 1876.

> The session has not opened very favourably for the Government. The Finance Minister's hocus-pocus expedients for balancing the Budget have been unanimously rejected by the Budget

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> Committee. The recent "glories" in Tonquin hardly outweigh in public estimation the growing expenses of the operations there and in China. Ferry told me he disliked the protective duties on cattle and corn, but that the Government could not altogether resist them, though it would endeavour to make them as moderate as possible. Rouvier,[344] the new Minister of Commerce, is less Protectionist than his predecessor, Hérisson;[345] but I have no confidence in the so-called Free Trade principles of any Frenchman. Duties on manufactures are sure to follow in the wake of duties on food, and I can never forget that we hold our Most Favoured Nation treatment only at the good pleasure of the French Government. The proceedings of the Lyonnais are socialist and revolutionary, and a great impetus has been given to Socialism by the journeyings during the recess of the sub-committees of the General Committee appointed by the Chamber of Deputies to inquire into the distress of the working classes. Nevertheless the chances still seem to be that the Ferry Ministry will weather the storms of the autumn session.

Ferry complained bitterly of the English press. He said in particular that the irritating lecturing tone of the Times goaded the French to madness; though he himself observed that it used the same tone towards the Government of its own country. I said that the press on both sides of the Channel seemed to work as if for the express purpose of producing ill-will between the two countries; but that certainly the English Government had no power to restrain it. A good understanding between the two Governments and friendly proceedings on their parts to each other, would in time act upon public opinion; and saying this, I preached a little more on the text of the importance of the French Government's not making itself unnecessarily disagreeable.

Her Majesty's Government were at this time involved in domestic as well as external difficulties, and Lord Granville's reply to the foregoing letter contained a renewal of the old importunity to come over and vote in

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the House of Lords on a party question. It is quite obvious that Lord Granville was impelled to do so by Gladstone, and the typical Gladstonian reasoning is shown in the argument that Lord Lyons ought to vote, because being an Ambassador he was a non-party man; whereas on previous occasions his vote had been applied for, because he distinctly ranked as a party man in the Whip's list.

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[344] Maurice Rouvier (1842 – 1911) was a French statesman of the "Opportunist" faction, who twice served as the Prime Minister of France. He is best known for his financial policies and his unpopular policies designed to avoid a rupture with Germany.

[345] Charles Hérisson (1831 – 1893) was a French lawyer and politician of the French Third Republic. He was a member of the National Assembly of 1871, where he joined the Opportunist Republican parliamentary group, *Gauche républicaine*. He served as minister of commerce in the Government of France.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
Walmer, Oct. 18, 1884.

> Gladstone writes to me earnestly, but I think reasonably, respecting your vote at the present important crisis.
>
> He says that you must be aware of the estimate we hold of your judgment and independence. But to save the House of Lords from a tempest which must strain and may wreck it, some Tory Lords will be moved to vote for the Franchise Bill, and he asks why the same motive should not operate upon men like our Ambassadors, who he believes are of no party.
>
> I own I think that the same majority, or possibly a larger one in the Lords, would be a great disaster.
>
> If the Liberal Party take up hostility to the House of Lords itself as its leading question—whether led by Gladstone himself, or not,—and with a leader of the Lords who is personally in favour of getting a larger career of power and utility for himself in the Commons, it is difficult not to foresee the result.
>
> With regard to immediate politics, supposing Salisbury[346] succeeds in forcing a dissolution, and with the help of the Irish turns us out, what chance is there of his not being turned out in six months by nearly the same process?
>
> The Waddingtons came here to luncheon. I guessed that they funked being reported as being here. He was very civil, and his talk was not altogether unpromising.

No one with the slightest practical acquaintance with politics could possibly be taken in by the Gladstonian

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phrase about the "estimate of your judgment and independence." Ministers when urging their docile supporters either in the Lords or the Commons to support a party measure, are not in the habit of boasting that some eminent person, whether an Ambassador or not, is going to give a silent vote in their favour, and even if they did, it would not produce the slightest effect. One peer's vote is as good as another's, and in the division list an Ambassador counts no higher than the most obscure of backwoodsmen.

Anglo-French relations were not improved by the occurrences in the Far East, where the French, in consequence of the Tonquin expedition, had drifted into war with China. The Chinese fleet, composed of small obsolete vessels, was destroyed at Foochow by the heavily armed French ships in August; but as the Chinese Government showed no signs of yielding, the French Admiral, Courbet,[347] was ordered to seize part of the island of Formosa, where valuable coal mines were known to exist. In order to effect his object, Admiral Courbet, with a magnificent disregard of all neutral Powers, proclaimed a paper blockade of Formosa,

[346] Then leader of the Conservatives. (*See footnote on page 105*)
[347] Anatole-Amédée-Prosper Courbet (1827 – 1885) was a French admiral who won a series of important land and naval victories during the Tonkin Campaign (1883 – 86) and the Sino-French War (August 1884 – April 1885).

which naturally provoked a protestation on the part of the British Government. During the remainder of the year hostilities between France and China continued, although from time to time recurrence to the friendly offices of Her Majesty's Government was suggested but found impracticable.

Egypt, however, remained the centre of interest, and the prospects of any amicable arrangement appeared to recede further into the distance. Upon the return of Lord Northbrook, the new proposals of Her Majesty's Government were put before the French Government.

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Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 26, 1884.

> I suppose Waddington's private statement to me that we must not expect an answer to our Egyptian proposals before the end of the year was intended to imply that we should get an answer about that time.
>
> I pressed Ferry strongly on the subject the day before yesterday. He assured me that he had studied our papers and was occupying himself without intermission on the subject, but I could not bring him to book as to the exact time we might look for an answer, nor could I extract from him any hint as to what the answer was to be.
>
> I am afraid that the draft of it has gone, or is going, to Berlin, and I augur anything but good from this. It seems to me that without being driven to anything of the kind by German interests, Bismarck has lately taken a sort of malicious pleasure in treating matters in a way calculated to embarrass and discredit us.
>
> You may be quite sure that I shall leave no stone unturned to get an answer as soon as possible. I don't think threats of Tunisifying Egypt, or of bankruptcy, or other strong measures, would tell upon the French. They would not believe that we should have recourse to such measures, in face of the opposition of France, Germany, Austria, and Russia, even if we had the thoroughgoing support of Italy. I should hesitate to bring matters to a point at which we could only execute our threats by a very large display of military and naval force, or back out of them. The best card in our hand, and it is not a high trump, is the reluctance of the French to be thrown irretrievably into the clutches of Bismarck by a distinct quarrel with us.
>
> Ferry seemed grateful to you for the way in which you sounded him through Waddington about new proposals from China, but he appears to think that any eagerness on his part to receive new proposals would be looked upon by the Chinese as a sign of weakness, and short of absolutely

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> giving in on the part of China, an action *d'éclat*[348] on the part of the French forces would answer best for him with the Chambers.

[348] A brilliant action.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Dec. 30, 1884.

I put your letter myself into Errington's hand this morning.[349] He starts for Italy this evening.

You will see by the despatch I send with this that Ferry promises an answer on the Egyptian Finances on the 15th of next month, and that he intends to make counter-proposals. I cried out at his mentioning so distant a date as the 15th, but he would not name a nearer one. If, as I cannot but surmise, he is consulting Berlin, I fear that neither speed nor conciliation to us will be recommended from that quarter. I confess I cannot think of any threat which would be likely to mend matters. The French would probably rejoice at any crisis which might array distinctly against us the three Emperors, as well as this Republic. I doubt the Tonquin affair being very much of a safeguard. I should feel safer if France were not getting into the habit of sending out distant expeditions.

I report officially this evening Ferry's language about the new Chinese proposals. The Chambers were all in favour of an action *d'éclat*. I don't think Ferry could face them with another doubtful negotiation on his hands which would suspend military action. At any rate he does not seem to wish to hear anything of Chinese proposals, short of actual surrender.

At the beginning of 1885 Her Majesty's Government were confronted with the unpleasant fact, that whereas hitherto they had only had French opposition to reckon with in respect to Egypt, Bismarck had now engineered a European combination against them in consequence of dissatisfaction at the English attitude

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towards his colonial policy. The English financial proposals, more especially those which suggested that the interest on the debt should be reduced, and the Anglo-French Administration of the Daira and Domain Lands should be abolished, were denounced in unmeasured terms in France. Nor did it seem easy to devise any efficacious means either of reconciling the French to the proposals or of putting pressure on them. The time for putting pressure on France was past; earlier in the day, a representation that a refusal to consent to measures necessary for the well being and good administration of Egypt would oblige the British Government to take the country formally under their protection, after the fashion of Tunis, would have met with little opposition; but now France might go to any extremities to resist such an arrangement, feeling sure that in so doing she would have the support of Germany, Austria, and Russia. Under these circumstances the prospect of a financial crisis, or even of bankruptcy, produced little alarm, because it was felt that the support of the three Empires would be forthcoming in demanding that the Egyptian financial administration should be placed under the joint control of the Powers; and it was in fact only too probable that the intractability of the French Government would increase in proportion with the support obtained from Germany and the Powers which followed the German lead.

[349] Mr. G. Errington, M.P., had been despatched by Mr. Gladstone on a secret mission to the Vatican in connection with the Home Rule agitation. (LN). Sir George Errington, 1st Baronet (1839 – 1920) was an Irish Home Rule League politician. He was elected an MP for Longford in 1874 and held the seat until it was abolished in 1885.

It was hardly credible that the patronage of Germany was acceptable to the French public or entirely satisfactory to the French Government, as the danger, not to say the humiliation, of falling altogether into

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the hands of Bismarck, could not quite be lost sight of. The French Government no doubt had two objects in view; the first, to make use of the support of Germany and the Powers, in order to guard French pecuniary interests, and to improve as far as possible the political position of France in Egypt; the second, to avoid severing themselves so entirely from England as to be left wholly at the mercy of Germany. Unfortunately for England the second object appeared to be the one to which the lesser importance was attached.

In short, the probabilities were, that unless we succeeded in coming to some arrangement with France, we should find arrayed against us all the European Powers, except Italy, the position in which we were placed at the moment, in consequence of the expedition to Khartoum, having been taken into account in calculating the means at our disposal to withstand such a coalition. It should be mentioned that the friendship of Italy had been purchased by an arrangement under which she was to take possession of Massowah[350] and the adjacent coast.

The French counter-proposals respecting Egyptian Finance were communicated in the middle of January.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Jan. 20, 1885.

> I earnestly hope that a settlement of the Egyptian Financial Question may be the result of the Cabinet to-day. That question seems to me to have a disastrous effect on our foreign relations everywhere.
>
> Bismarck and Ferry are *jouant au plus fin*[351] with each other at our expense. Each seems to think that he can use the other to help in thwarting us, without risk to himself. But Bismarck has the best of the game. He occupies the French thoughts, and to some extent their forces, at a

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> distance from Europe: he keeps up irritation between them and us, and some of the acquisitions he encourages them to make (Tonquin for instance) will in all probability be a permanent cause of weakness to them. At the same time he neutralizes opposition from us to his childish colonial schemes, which I cannot help suspecting are founded as much on what, for want of a better word, I must call spite against us, as on any real expectation of advantage to Germany. Ferry hopes, by means of Bismarck and the Powers who follow Bismarck's lead, to carry his immediate points in regard to Egypt and other parts of the world, and so increase his reputation at home for the moment; and he trusts to his skill to enable him to stop before he has so entirely alienated us as to be quite at Bismarck's mercy. It is the natural disposition

[350] Massawa is a port city in the Northern Red Sea region of Eritrea.
[351] Having a battle of wits.

of almost all Europe to side against us, as matters stand, on the Egyptian Financial Question, which makes this pretty game possible.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, Feb. 3, 1885.

I am provoked by Ferry's tardiness in sending Waddington the instructions to proceed with the Egyptian Finances Question. He has evidently been waiting for the approval of Berlin. I am more than ever impatient to get this question disposed of. One, and not the least of my reasons, is the desire to get rid of this habit of referring every moment to Bismarck.

The Tonquin and China affairs seem to get more perplexing and more expensive to the French in men and money every day. It seems very doubtful that Ferry will get the action d'éclat he is looking for there, in time for the election; and if he do not, it may go hard with him in the new Chamber.

The *Gaulois* announces that a great Anglo-French meeting is to be held in Paris in the month of March, at which a resolution is to be voted that England and France must remain united in the interests of liberty in Europe. According to the *Gaulois*, "*Mr. Cremer,*[352] *secrétaire general de la*

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Workmen's Peace Association," is in communication about it with M. Clémenceau, who is to organise the meeting in conjunction with Mr. Burns,[353] *Membre de la Chambre des Communes,* who would come to Paris with a delegation of English workmen. If there be any truth in the story, the object of the French promoters of this demonstration is probably to embarrass the Ferry Government.

The Mr. Burns referred to was presumably the present President of the Local Government Board, but the description of him as an M.P. was premature.

Negotiations between the French and English Governments over the financial proposals were resumed, and eventually some sort of arrangement was arrived at, but in the meanwhile all interest had been transferred to the Soudan. The battle of Abou Klea took place on January 19, and on February 5 there arrived the news of the fall of Khartoum and death of Gordon. The French were not wanting in appreciation of the gallantry shown by the British troops, but were prodigal of gloomy forebodings with regard to the future prospects of the expeditions. Prominent amongst these prophets of evil were Lesseps and Jules Ferry. Lesseps (on the strength of having once been on a tour in the Soudan with the ex-Khedive) considered that an attempt to advance would be madness, and that the army was in great danger of being surrounded. He thought that the only prudent course would be to concentrate the forces and keep them behind walls and entrenchments until the autumn. But even then he did not see

[352] Sir William Randal Cremer (1828 – 1908) usually known as Randal Cremer, was a British Liberal Member of Parliament, a pacifist, and a leading advocate for international arbitration. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1903 for his work with the international arbitration movement.

[353] John Elliot Burns (1858 – 1943) was an English trade unionist and politician, particularly associated with London politics and Battersea. He was a socialist and then a Liberal Member of Parliament and a Minister. He was anti-alcohol and a keen sportsman. When the Liberal cabinet made a decision for war on 2 August 1914, he resigned and played no further role in politics.

how the army could ever get away if it were stoutly opposed by the Arabs, as the scarcity of water and other difficulties would make the Berber-Suakim route impracticable;

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and in short he was convinced that the only practical plan was to come to terms with the Mahdi, and that the only means of making terms with the Madhi would be to reinstate Ismail as Khedive and utilize his influence. This surprising conclusion was due to the fact that Lesseps had for a long time been exerting himself in every possible way to bring about the restoration of Ismail.

M. Jules Ferry was also full of condolences upon the British position in the Soudan, but was, at the same time, not at all enthusiastic about the French position in the Far East. He admitted that the troops in Tonquin were sickly and that the climate was odious; that neither in Tonquin nor Formosa could any blow be struck which China would really feel, but that nevertheless "in the interests of civilization as represented in those parts by France and England, it was necessary to deal a stunning blow (*coup foudroyant*) at the huge Empire of China." This might be effected by landing an attacking force in China proper, or by blockading the ports, but either of these methods would involve great difficulties with other Powers, and the only thing that remained to be done was to dismember the Empire. Once China was broken up into three or four provinces she would become comparatively harmless. M. Jules Ferry's views were expressed after a dinner at the Embassy, and Lord Lyons in reporting the conversation remarked that his wine must be more heady than he imagined.

Before long, however, a crisis in another part of the world temporarily distracted attention from Egypt and brought home to every thinking person the indefinite and multifarious responsibilities of British rule, as

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well as the singularly inadequate military resources available. Prominent British statesmen had long derided the absurdity of supposing that England and Russia could ever become involved in disputes in Central Asia, but, profiting by our embarrassments in Egypt, the Russian Government had adopted so aggressive a policy, that even the peace-loving Gladstone Government found itself on the brink of a collision before the end of February. This critical situation and the possibility of a conflict between England and Russia, far from giving satisfaction to the French, afforded them just cause for anxiety.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 13, 1885.

> The critical state of things between England and Russia has come more home to the French mind during the last few days, and is looked upon with increased alarm. Whatever may be Bismarck's feelings and plans, the French cannot help feeling that it would be a great danger to them for him to be without counterpoise in Europe. Those who believe that they see far ahead, declare that Bismarck's ultimate object is Holland, and that Belgium, or a part of Belgium, is to be given to France as a compensation for the annexation of Holland to Germany. To this end they conceive that Bismarck has aimed at embroiling Russia with England, so that the one may paralyse the other; at separating England and France, and at setting up an alliance between France and Germany. It is to be hoped that many Frenchmen would shrink from taking part in an iniquity which would be equalled only by the partition of

Poland. It is to be supposed that none can be so blind as not to see that Bismarck will never make a territorial arrangement which would increase the relative strength of France as compared with that of Germany. It can hardly be doubted that Bismarck must be well aware that so far from the gift of Belgium

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reconciling the French to the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, any additional power that gift might confer upon them would certainly be used, on the first opportunity, for the recovery of the two lost Provinces.

To people who incline to more simple and obvious explanations of political conduct, Bismarck himself seems to be rather old to indulge in any hope of executing schemes of this kind. Moreover, the character of the Emperor would in all probability prevent his sanctioning such proceedings, while His Majesty's death would, in all probability, greatly diminish, if not put an end to, Bismarck's influence. Bismarck may in fact be working in order to attain smaller and more immediate objects, and to gratify personal feelings.

However all this may be, the French decidedly wish to prevent a rupture between England and Russia. They do not relish the effect upon the position of Bismarck in Europe which would be the consequence of France herself, England and Russia, being all hampered by being engaged in wars in the extreme East.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
March 14, 1885.

I doubt the Russians going quite to extremes, but the risk is great.

Bismarck is behaving as ill as possible—after the mission of peace and a complete making up, creating difficulties at the last moment about Egyptian finances, concerning which he promised that no objections would be raised by Germany, if France and England were agreed. It is supposed to be with a view to getting a decree against us at Cairo before the settlement.

The military preparations for a possible struggle with Russia were typical of the manner in which British statesmen occasionally prepare for the worst. In order to strike terror into a Power which could dispose of

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millions of soldiers, two army corps of 25,000 men each were ordered to be mobilized in India, and as "a time of emergency had arrived," it was announced that the first-class army reserve and militia reserve would be called out; their total numbers amounting to the stupendous figure of about 70,000 men. By these steps it was hoped that the greatest military Power in the world would be overawed.

From one embarrassment Her Majesty's Government were fortunately relieved, the basis of an arrangement with France having been arrived at with regard to Egyptian Finance. Mr. Gladstone, with whom Lord Lyons had been requested to communicate direct, wrote expressing his relief, but was obviously far more concerned to demonstrate the turpitude of his political opponents.

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyons.
10, Downing St., March 21, 1885.

When you so kindly wrote to me about Egyptian Finance, I did not reply. Not because I was insensible or forgetful, but because the unsatisfactory condition of the question made it so difficult. Now, thank God, we are through, as far as Foreign Powers are concerned; and we have thus far escaped from a position the most hopeless and helpless that it is possible to conceive.

It remains a subject of regret, and of some surprise, that the Opposition are pressing for time before we take the vote, in a manner quite unusual, with almost a certainty of bankruptcy and financial chaos in Egypt, and the likelihood of consequences more than financial if we comply; and all this, as far as we can make out, because of the disorganized condition of the Tory party. It seems that the mutinous followers have exacted this condition from their leaders, as some reparation for the agreement about the Seats Bill, and for their other offences.

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To be defeated on the agreement would be *most* convenient for the Government (for me priceless) but somewhat ruinous or mischievous, I think, to all the rest of the world.

We must of course hold our ground.

The rooted belief of Ministers that their continuance in office is absolutely essential to the welfare of the universe as well as to that of the British Empire is, of course, a well-known phenomenon which has manifested itself in more recent times in the case of both political parties. In 1885 the difficulties of the Gladstone Government continued to grow, and it was fortunate for Lord Granville's peace of mind that he was an optimist by nature.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
March 25, 1885.

The incorrigible Turk has not yet sent instructions to Musurus.[354] We have tried the most serious threats, which Musurus believes will be successful.

But if we do not take care, we shall soon be at war with the Mahdi, with Turkey, and with the Russians.

I do not know how the latter question will finish. Being of a sanguine disposition, I hope for the best. We are determined to take a firm stand.

Do you believe that the French have many tricks in hand for the Suez Canal Commission?

[354] Konstantinos Mousouros (1807 – 1891), also known as Kostaki Musurus Pasha, was an Ottoman Greek diplomatic official of the Ottoman Empire who served as ambassador to Greece, Austria, Great Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In 1850 he took up the post of Ottoman ambassador to the Great Britain and Ireland, which he kept for 35 consecutive years, until his retirement in 1885.

Early in April there arrived the news of the fight at Penjdeh, where, to use Gladstone's own expression, the attack of the Russians upon the Afghans "bore the appearance of an unprovoked aggression." A financial panic took place, consols fell 3 per cent., Russian stocks 9 per cent., and for a short time the impression

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prevailed that war was inevitable. In the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone made one of those eloquent statements which were so widely accepted by his followers as a satisfactory solution of any outstanding difficulty, but which failed to reassure the more intelligent; and even the optimistic Lord Granville felt some uncomfortable qualms.

> "It is too dreadful," he wrote on April 10th, "jumping from one nightmare into another.
>
> "Once at war with Russia we shall be obliged to toady Germany, France, and Turkey.
>
> "But I cannot believe that it will come to war. It cannot be a good move of the Russians to have created a blood feud with the Afghans.
>
> "Not having a genius for war, I do not know how we are effectively to carry it on against Russia, although it is not off the cards that it may break her up."

Probably Lord Granville was not singular in his inability to see how a war on land was to be effectively carried on against Russia.

In the meanwhile the French were not without their own foreign troubles. M. Jules Ferry had spoken of the necessity of inflicting a *coup foudroyant*. The *coup foudroyant* fell in a totally unexpected fashion upon his own head, in the shape of a defeat of the French forces at Lang-Son.[355] The news of the reverse arrived in Paris on March 25, and created so absurd a panic and so strong a feeling against Spirited Colonial Policy that Jules Ferry at once bowed to the storm and resigned on the 31st. He had been in office for the unprecedented period of two years and one month, which alone was sufficient cause for disappearance; nor

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could it be said that his administration had been colourless, for he had passed an important Education Bill, established the Protectorate of France in Tunis, and annexed Tonquin and Madagascar.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, March 31, 1885.

Ferry was certainly at work quietly with negotiations for peace with China, and no doubt he calculated on playing it as a high trump at the Elections; and a great card it would have been for him, for the war in Tonquin is extremely unpopular. The reverse at Lang-Son has changed all this; the extreme Right have always had a special hatred of Ferry on account of the suppression of the religious communities, and Clémenceau and the extreme Left have become bitterly hostile to him personally. Not many of his own party cared to stick to him

[355] A city in the north-east of Vietnam close to the Chinese border.

when their own popularity would have been risked by doing so. And, besides, he had been in office for two years; a very unusually long period of late, and people were tired of him.

Freycinet is now trying to form a Cabinet. It is not certain that he will succeed, and if he does succeed, it is very doubtful whether his Cabinet will last. His idea seems to be to take into it Republicans of all shades, not excluding deep Red. The Republicans have been rather startled by the progress, far from great though it has been, of the Conservatives and Monarchists (Orleanist and Imperialist) in the constituencies; and the notion seems to be that the importance to them of resisting this, may keep them together and prevent them quarrelling with each other, at all events until after the Elections. But anyway, each change of Ministry produces a further step towards the Left, and there is a foundation for the fear that there may be socialist legislation against property and proprietors, and that the Government may by degrees throw away all the means of resisting anarchy.

Freycinet's own tendencies would be towards peace. Now there is nothing but flame and fury against the Chinese, but considering the general unpopularity of the war this may to a

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certain extent subside. He would, I think, desire to be on good terms with all countries. He would hardly be so subservient to Bismarck as Ferry had lately become. It so happens that personally he and I are particularly good friends.

Towards the end of April the British Government asked for a credit of eleven millions, and the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone worked his faithful followers up to a belief in verbiage which is almost pathetic. "Gladstone's magnificent speech had a great effect here," wrote Lord Granville. "It will hasten the dénouement one way or the other in Russia. I understand that the Emperor is decidedly pacific; but he believes his father lost himself from want of firmness, that he himself is determined to be firm, and that the particular firmness which appeals to him, is not that which goes against the wishes of his army."

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 1, 1885.

> A war between England and Russia is much dreaded by the French. They fear that it would leave Bismarck without any counterpoise in Europe. Any influence they may have will no doubt be exercised in favour of peace, but their influence at this moment does not count very much. I do not know that they would have any strong sympathy with Russia if hostilities broke out, but such a feeling would be produced by anything which irritated them with us on account of Egyptian or other matters. Anyhow we must be prepared to find them exacting and susceptible.
>
> The consequences of the war as regards the money market here would be disastrous; but it is believed they would be still more disastrous at Berlin.
>
> The dangerous point is considered here to be the notions of military honour, of a

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> peculiar kind, which prevail in the Russian as much as, or more than, in other Continental armies.

These military notions in the armies do not at all require that the rulers of the armies should keep their words to foreigners, or abide by their international engagements; but they do require that, right or wrong, the rulers should not allow the *amour-propre* of the army to be wounded. The Emperor of Russia probably shares these feelings, and at any rate he would certainly be afraid to run counter to them. Those here who profess to understand Russia declare that she has no desire to take Herat or to annex any part of Afghanistan. They think that the ultimate object at which she is really aiming is to extend her possessions to the Persian Gulf, and that she would be tractable enough about the Afghan frontier, if that question were separated from military honour, or rather vanity.

I met Freycinet and Herbette[356] at dinner yesterday. They seemed to be much relieved at having got rid of the *Bosphore Egyptien* difficulty, and to be really much obliged to you for the help you had given to them.

The *Bosphore Egyptien*, a French newspaper in Cairo, which continually attacked the British administration in Egypt with unparalleled malignity, had at length worn out the patience of Sir Evelyn Baring, and been temporarily suspended.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville.
Paris, May 15, 1885.

The symptoms apparent here indicate that Bismarck is busily employed in getting up a European coalition against England on the Egyptian question. He has very nearly succeeded, if not quite, in isolating us in the Suez Canal Commission. He would seem to have put great pressure for this purpose upon Italy, who was disposed to side with us, and to have frightened or cajoled Holland and Spain. With Russia and Austria he seems to have made a regular cabal.

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It has required great tact and firmness on Pauncefote's[357] part to have resisted the endeavours to turn the Commission into a political conference on the whole Egyptian question, and at the same time to have avoided breaking it up prematurely. Another circumstance which Bismarck is using as a lever against us, is the levying by the Egyptian Government of the tax upon the coupon, before the Financial Convention has been ratified by all the parties to it.

He has sent Courcel here from Berlin to seduce or terrify the French Government, and is said to have charged him with large offers relative to establishing an international administration in Egypt, and assigning to France a preponderant influence in such an administration. What the real offers may be, of course, I cannot say, but I think the

[356] Jules Gabriel Herbette (1839 – 1901) was a French diplomat, French consul, minister plenipotentiary, chief of staff and director of personnel at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then French ambassador to Berlin (1886 –1 896)

[357] Julian Pauncefote, 1st Baron Pauncefote (1828 – 1902), known as Sir Julian Pauncefote between 1874 and 1899, was a British barrister, judge and diplomat. He was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1882 and 1889 when he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States and would be the last to use that title, as the office was upgraded to that of Ambassador to the United States in March 1893. He was appointed first British delegate to the Suez Canal Conference in Paris in 1885.

> French are half afraid of them. Probably, like all Bismarck's demonstrations in so-called support of France, they contain the essential elements—the employing a considerable number of French troops at a distance from France, and the promoting ill-will between France and England.

These suspicions as to Bismarck's motives were confirmed by Lord Rosebery, who at the time occupied a minor post in the Gladstone administration, and had lately paid a visit to Germany.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons.
May 30, 1885.

> Rosebery has not yet written out the report (which Blowitz saw), but he has given me a full account from his notes.
>
> Bismarck acknowledged that he had been thwarting us in every way; but at the last conversation (influenced, Rosebery thought, by an unsatisfactory conversation with Courcel[358]) he was much more conciliatory.
>
> He was exceedingly civil to Rosebery; hostile to Gladstone, and especially to Derby.
>
> He is a great man, but he sees through a great many millstones.

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> The Emperor is certainly unwell. Rosebery is convinced that Bismarck will retire for a time on his death.

Judging from the material available, no statesman ever disliked so many persons as Bismarck, and the objects of his antipathy were not confined to his own sex. Busch's book and the works of other authors contain frequent references to the grievances which he entertained towards women who were alleged to have interfered with his policy, and, whether these charges were well founded or not, he made no secret of his animosity against even so important a personage as the Empress Augusta. In fact there can be little doubt that it was owing to the despotic influence exercised by the Chancellor that the Empress, who had had the misfortune to incur his displeasure, was forced to leave Berlin and to reside for a considerable period at Coblentz.

Apparently the man who inspired him with the greatest aversion was Gortschakoff, but it is easy to understand that from the Bismarckian point of view, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby represented a singularly futile type of statesman. Lord Rosebery's prophecy with regard to his retirement was only partially correct. In private conversation, Bismarck is understood to have calculated upon three years of office under the present German Emperor; whereas he only succeeded in remaining for two, and his retirement was compulsory and not voluntary.

[358] Baron Alphonse Chodron de Courcel (1835 – 1919) was a French diplomat and politician. He was French ambassador to Germany from 1881 to 1886, French ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1894 to 1898, and Senator of Seine-et-Oise from 1892 to 1919. He represented France at the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885.

CHAPTER XVI. ANGLOPHOBIA. (1883-1885)

One of the notable events in Paris in 1885 was the death of Victor Hugo.[359] His funeral was made the occasion of a great ceremonial, and Queen Victoria, who was always much interested in functions of this nature,

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desired that she should be furnished with a special report. Any one who happened to have been a witness of the Victor Hugo funeral would corroborate the accuracy of the following account, which is probably in striking contrast to the word pictures of the newspaper correspondents of the time.

Paris, June 4, 1885.

> Lord Lyons presents his humble duty to Your Majesty and in obedience to Your Majesty's commands, proceeds to state the impression made upon him by the funeral of Victor Hugo.
>
> There was nothing striking, splendid or appropriate, either in the monstrous catafalque erected under the Arc de Triomphe, or in the trappings of the funeral. There was nothing mournful or solemn in the demeanour of the people. The impressive part of the scene consisted in the vast crowds from all parts of France and from many other countries. As decorations of the scene, were the innumerable wreaths, some conveyed in cars and some carried in the hands of those who offered them.
>
> The aspect was that of a vast assemblage of people gathered together for some ordinary demonstration, or from curiosity. On the other hand, perfect order was preserved. Both those who joined in the procession and those who lined the streets through which it passed, maintained the good humour and civility which are seldom wanting to a Paris crowd. At some points attempts were made to raise anarchical or socialistic cries, but met with no response. The distance from the point of departure to the Arc de Triomphe is about three miles by the route taken, which was through some of the finest avenues of Paris. The procession began at 11 o'clock in the morning and went on until after 4 in the afternoon.
>
> The general impression left upon Lord Lyons by the day was one of weariness and unconcern. The orderliness of the people was a satisfactory symptom, but the total absence of strong feeling was chilling, and the studied avoidance of any recognition of religion did away with all solemnity.

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On June 12, the Gladstone Government, having been defeated during a Budget debate, resigned, and left to the Conservatives the ungrateful task of facing an accumulation of difficulties while in a minority in the House of Commons. Lord Salisbury took Lord Granville's place at the Foreign Office and the transfer was marked by a double compliment

[359] Victor-Marie Hugo, vicomte Hugo (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). In France, Hugo is renowned for his poetry collections, such as *Les Contemplations* and *La Légende des siècles* (The Legend of the Ages). Hugo was at the forefront of the Romantic literary movement with his play *Cromwel*l and drama *Hernani*. He produced more than 4,000 drawings in his lifetime, and campaigned for social causes such as the abolition of capital punishment and of slavery.

to Lord Lyons. Lord Granville, who was always extremely popular with all those with whom he was in any way connected, with habitual kindliness and generosity expressed his obligations to the Ambassador. "An ordinary letter of farewell and of thanks would very inadequately express my feelings to you. I cannot say how much I have valued the loyal and important assistance you have given me in most difficult circumstances."

Lord Salisbury showed his appreciation by at once asking him to come over to England in order to discuss the general situation, and upon his return to Paris in July, he was able to report that the change of Government in England appeared to have had a beneficial effect upon Anglo-French relations. "The statement you made in the House of Lords has made an excellent impression. Freycinet seems to be really disposed to abstain from endeavouring to thwart us or to raise difficulties for us with regard to Egyptian Finance. He also appears to be inclined to come to terms with us about Newfoundland and other matters. I think he is sincerely desirous to put the relations between the two countries on a good footing, but I cannot yet say that he will be willing to make sacrifices for this purpose."

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As Freycinet, however, showed few symptoms of being willing to retire from the position he had taken up with regard to the eventual British evacuation of Egypt, and to the resumption by France of an influence equal with our own, his professions of friendship did not appear to be of much value. Some apprehension too was caused by the ostentatious announcements in the French press, that the numerous military forces in the Far East released in consequence of the conclusion of peace with China would return by the Suez Canal and would therefore be 'available for other purposes in the Mediterranean.' What was perhaps more encouraging, was the increasing distaste for Spirited Colonial Policy combined with renewed distrust of Bismarck's intentions.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 14, 1885.

> I have been rejoiced by your telegram announcing that Germany, Austria, and Italy agree to the issue of the Egyptian Loan Decree. It looks as if you were on the eve of settling the question most pressing in point of time (that of the money for Egypt), and I hope it augurs well for the disposition generally of the German Chancellor. The National Fête here puts a stop to all business for to-day, but I shall see Freycinet about the issue of the Decree to-morrow.
>
> The debate on the Budget for 1886 elicited some curious speeches in the Chamber of Deputies three days ago on the "*Expéditions lointaines*."[360] There was no difficulty in showing that they had all cost more than they were worth. They were plainly held by the Deputies to be unpopular in the country, and condemnation of them is likely to be one of the election cries of the extreme Left. But hardly any one seemed to see the way to bring them to an end. In fact, it looked as if

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> France had got into the groove which by a fatality leads to annexation and conquest by strong and civilized nations when they once begin to establish themselves amongst weak and barbarous peoples. All this may delight Prince Bismarck, whose avowed

[360] Distant expeditions.

> object is to find an outlet for what he calls French vanity and restlessness, and a gulf to swallow up French troops and treasures at a distance from Europe. From a certain point of view this may not be without its advantages to other nations; but it is not without danger to the good relations between France and England—between whom awkward questions may arise all over the world. In the present I am uneasy about Siam and more so about Burmah. It is not a pleasant speculation to consider the change which may be produced in no very remote future, in the condition of our Indian Empire, if it be in contact with a great European Power both on the north and on the east.

In August, 1885, a prodigious outburst of Anglophobia occurred in Paris in consequence of mendacious statements published by Rochefort[361] in his newspaper, charging the British military authorities in the Soudan with the assassination of a certain Olivier Pain. Olivier Pain was an ex-Communist and French journalist who had accompanied the Turks in the campaign of 1877, and who was reputed to be occasionally employed by the Turkish Government as a secret agent. In the spring of 1884, he had set off to join the Mahdi, and having completely disappeared from view, and being presumably dead, Rochefort took the opportunity to announce that Lord Wolseley had procured his death by offering a reward of fifty pounds for his head. The enterprise had been allotted to Major Kitchener[362]: "*un sinistre gredin nourri de psaumes et abreuvé de whisky qui a eu le premier, l'idée de mettre à prix la tête de celui qu'il appelait "l'espion français*." (a dreadful scoundrel fed on psalms and drunk on whiskey who was the first to have the idea of putting a price on the head of the man he called "the French spy".)

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As, however, it was impossible to reach Lord Wolseley and the "*sinistre gredin*," Rochefort urged that vengeance should be taken upon *l'Ambassadeur Lyons*. "*A partir d'aujourd'hui il est notre ôtage! Sa vieille peau est le gage de la satisfaction qui nous est due*." (From today he is our hostage! His old skin is the guarantee of the satisfaction that is due to us.)

"*L'Ambassadeur Lyons*" was, however, also beyond reach, as he happened to be on leave, and it was, therefore, suggested that the few secretaries (of whom I was one), who were then in Paris, should be forthwith strung up to the lamp-posts in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré. The astonishing thing was that these ravings were actually taken more or less seriously, and that for some time the French authorities found it necessary to protect the Embassy with numerous police detachments.

It has always been one of the inscrutable mysteries that Rochefort, ever since the Commune, was allowed a toleration accorded to no one else, on the ground of his alleged exceptional wit and humour, whereas his effusions consisted almost entirely of gross personal abuse of the lowest type, levelled indiscriminately at prominent individuals of any description, and largely directed against England, whose hospitality he enjoyed during many years of exile.

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[361] Victor Henri Rochefort, Marquis de Rochefort-Luçay (1831 – 1913) was a French writer of vaudevilles and a politician. He founded *L'Intransigeant* in the radical and socialist interest in 1880. It moved towards the right in support of Boulanger.

[362] Now Lord Kitchener. (LN). Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener (1850 – 5 June 1916) was an Anglo-Irish British Army officer and colonial administrator. Kitchener came to prominence for his imperial campaigns, his involvement in the Second Boer War and his central role in the early part of the First World War until his death on the sinking of HMS Hampshire *en route* for Russia.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST YEAR'S WORK. (1886-1887)

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The sudden and unexpected declaration in September of the Union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia which caused so much perturbation in Europe, and resulted in a war between Servia and Bulgaria, left the French quite indifferent; but the imminence of hostilities between England and Burmah provoked French ill-humour, which was all the more inexcusable because no protest had ever been made against French proceedings in Tonquin and Madagascar. The truth was that the Burmese resistance to the Indian Government was largely due to French encouragement. As far back as 1883 a Burmese Mission had arrived in Paris, and kept studiously aloof from the British Embassy; and although every opportunity had been taken to impress upon the French Government the peculiar relations between Burmah and British India, there was not the least doubt that the object of the Burmese had been to obtain from the French Government such a Treaty as would enable them to appeal to France in the event of their being involved in difficulties with England. How much encouragement they actually received is not known, but it was probably sufficient to effect their undoing.

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> The papers are abusing us about Burmah, and being quite innocent of any aggression themselves in that part of the world, are horrified at our holding our own there. Nevertheless, I hope the Indian Government will finish the thing out of hand, for an ugly state of feeling about it is growing up here.

The rapidity with which the operations against Burmah were conducted left nothing to be desired. The campaign was over within a few weeks; on January 1, 1886, the annexation of Burmah was proclaimed, and the affairs of that country ceased to be of any further interest to the French Government.

Lord Salisbury's tenure of the Foreign Office, which had been marked by so successful a policy that even Mr. Gladstone had expressed satisfaction, came to an end early in 1886, and he was succeeded by Lord Rosebery. "The irony of events," wrote the latter to Lord Lyons, "has sent me to the Foreign Office, and one of the incidents of this which is most agreeable to me, is that it brings me into close relations with yourself."

Although the Paris press had circulated a ridiculous fiction that Lord Rosebery (presumably because he was personally acquainted with Bismarck) was anti-French by inclination, the change of Government in England was received in France with perfect equanimity, as had been the case in the previous autumn.

The new Foreign Secretary, however, could not fail to be painfully impressed by the unsatisfactory feeling which obviously existed in France towards England, and found it difficult of explanation.

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Lord Rosebery to Lord Lyons.
March 3, 1886.

I am rather anxious about the attitude of the French. In my short tenure of office they have brought up three or four questions, all in the highest degree distasteful to us.

1. The Consul at Suakim: as to which they say, with accuracy which is disputed, that they had gone too far and could not withdraw the appointment.

2. Arbitration on the Somali coast troubles: as to which they declare that Salisbury promised it, which Salisbury, I understand, denies.

3. The revival of the Suez Canal Commission.

4. The announcement made to me by Waddington yesterday that they should be obliged shortly to send a cargo of recidivists to the Isle of Pines. I remonstrated strongly with him, and indeed I cannot foresee all the consequences, should they carry their intention into effect. One, however, I do clearly perceive, which is that we should have to denounce the Postal Convention of 1856, which gives the Messageries privileges in Australian ports, which could not be sustained, and which the colonists would not for a moment, under such circumstances, respect.

But these are details. What I want to point out is the apparent animus displayed in these different proceedings. I shall not mention them to my colleagues until I hear your view of them, and anything you may be able to collect on the subject.

What does it all mean? These things did not occur during the late Government? Are they directed against the new Administration? I cannot view them as a chapter of accidents.

As for myself, I have entered upon this office with the most sincere wish to be friendly with France. There can be no earthly reason why we should not be so. It is a pity, therefore, that our cordiality should be poisoned at its source.

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I wish you would let me know what you think of all this. You can pick up much directly, and perhaps even more indirectly, on these points. Pray forgive the length of this letter.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Paris, March 5, 1886.

I have naturally been on the watch since you came into office for indications of the feelings of the French Government respecting the change. In answer to your letter of the day before yesterday, asking my opinion, I can only say that I think the French are quite as well disposed towards the new Government as they were to the late one—indeed, of the two, I should say better. We come so much into contact with the French all over the globe that questions more or less unpleasant are always arising in

smaller or greater numbers, according to circumstances; and French feeling is in a chronic state of irritability about Egypt.

The four subjects you mention are certainly annoying, but I do not believe that the French proceedings respecting them have been actuated by any animus against the present English Ministry.

I shall be somewhat staggered in this opinion, however, if the French Government proposes to substitute arbitration by any third Power for the understanding that the Somali coast questions shall be treated by friendly negotiations between the two Governments, and that meanwhile the status quo shall not be disturbed. With a view to proceeding with the negotiation, M. Waddington proposed to Lord Salisbury on Jan. 20th, and by a written note the next day, that an inquiry should be made on the spot by two Commissioners, one English and one French. Lord Salisbury received the verbal proposal favourably, but did not at the moment give a definitive answer.

The proposal to reassemble the Suez Canal Commission is simply the renewal of a proposal made by M. Waddington to Lord Salisbury at the beginning of January.

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The most serious of the affairs you mention appears to me to be the imminent despatch of a cargo of *récidivistes*[363] to the Isle of Pines[364]. I have seen from the beginning the importance of this *récidiviste* question as regards public feeling in Australia, and there is hardly any question about which I have taken so much trouble. I have attacked successive French Ministers upon it in season and out of season, but I have never succeeded in obtaining any promise that *récidivistes* should not be sent to the Pacific. As I reported to you, I remonstrated with Freycinet about the intention actually to send off a batch, as soon as I became aware of it. I did not perceive any difference in his manner or language from what they had been when some other Ministers had been in office in England, but my remonstrances were equally ineffectual. I am glad you had an opportunity of speaking strongly to Waddington. I see troubles ahead, for the Australians have before now threatened to pass Dominion laws against French ships found to have escaped convicts on board, which seem to go a good deal beyond international usage, not to say law.

It is time, however, for me to wind up this long story. My answer to your question is that I am far from thinking that there is any malus animus against Her Majesty's present Government on the part of Freycinet and his Cabinet. Nor do I know that there is more than the usual irritability towards England among the French public; but still I feel strongly that it behoves us to tread cautiously as well as firmly, when we are coming upon French ground.

The spring of 1886 was noticeable for another Government onslaught upon such members of ex-reigning families as were then residing in France. Of these the most conspicuous were the Orleans Princes. There was nothing in their conduct to cause alarm to the Republic, as they

[363] Prisoners who were repeat offenders.

[364] The Isle of Pines is an island in the Pacific Ocean, in the archipelago of New Caledonia, an overseas collectivity of France.

confined themselves to taking part in social functions, at which they maintained a kind of semi-state, being always attended by ladies and

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gentlemen-in-waiting after the manner of recognized Royal personages. This innocent procedure was sufficient excuse to work up an agitation against them, and to introduce an Expulsion Bill.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Paris, May 25, 1886.

> The question of the day is the expulsion of the Princes. The measure, if taken, will be quite unjustifiable, discreditable to the Government, and, I should say, not at all injurious to the cause of the victims. Considering the people and the institutions with which they had to deal, the partisans of the Orleans Princes have not been so prudent and correct as the Princes themselves. They have gone about twitting the Republicans with weakness for permitting the very mild demonstration made by the Royalists, and declaring that such want of vigour was simply a sign of the decay of the Republic.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The general opinion is that the Expulsion Bill will pass in its present, or even in an aggravated form, and that if it does, the Government will proceed to expel the Comte de Paris at least, if not the Duc de Chartres, and some others. On the other hand, it is not expected that the Bill confiscating the property, real and personal, of the Orleans and Bonapartes will be adopted.
>
> Much anxiety is felt respecting Boulanger's goings on with respect to the army. He seems to think of nothing but currying favour with the lowest ranks in the service, and with the mob outside. It is believed by many people that he would not act vigorously, as Minister of War, against any disturbances, but would try to turn them to account and set up for himself as dictator or what not.
>
> The financial situation is very bad, and if common scandal is to be listened to, the very short duration of French Ministries is having the effect of making most of the individual Ministers very unscrupulous and very impatient to make hay during the very short time that the sun shines.

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The above letter contains one of the first allusions to the enterprising impostor Boulanger, who very nearly succeeded in making history, and of whom much was to be heard for some considerable space of time. His popularity was due in great measure to the vague discontent which was then prevalent in France. People thought that they saw the same inefficiency in the Government, the same relaxation of authority, the same financial difficulties, and the same venality which marked the last days of the Second Empire. There seemed to be no individual, in or out of the Royal or Imperial Dynasties, capable of exciting any enthusiasm or of inspiring any confidence, and public feeling was in that state of lassitude and dissatisfaction which might give a reasonable chance for a bold stroke for power.

The scandalous Expulsion Bill passed both Chambers, and the Princes took their departure.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Paris, June 25, 1886.

The departure of the Comte de Paris from Eu[365] has been accompanied by many very sad circumstances, but I cannot help thinking that his political position is improved by his expulsion. His own partisans are much pleased at its having elicited from him a distinct assertion of a claim to the throne, and of a determination to work for the restoration of monarchy.

It is less easy to give an opinion on the position of the Princes who have remained in France. It seems to be hardly compatible with dignity and comfort, considering the unabated hostility to them of the Reds, who seem generally to end in overpowering all generous and conservative feelings in the Chambers and in the Government.

Prince Napoleon and his son Prince Victor went off in opposite directions, one to Geneva, the

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other to Brussels. The departure of neither seems to have made much apparent sensation in Paris when it took place, but I am far from certain that Prince Victor is not really a more formidable opponent to the Republic than is the Comte de Paris.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Paris, July 2, 1886.

The topic of the day here is the conduct of the Minister of War, General Boulanger. He was supposed to be an Orleanist. Then he went round to Clémençeau, and was put into Freycinet's Cabinet as a representative of the Clémençeau party, which though not the most Red in the Chamber, is more Red than the Freycinet section. Since he has been in office Boulanger has lost no opportunity of ingratiating himself with the Radicals, and he has been travelling about the country making speeches, the object of which has evidently been to gain personal popularity for himself without regard to his colleagues.

He has also by degrees put creatures of his own into the great military commands. A crisis was produced, during the last few days, by his quarrelling with General Saussier,[366] the military Governor of Paris, and provoking him into resigning. He is also said to have used strange language in the Council of Ministers. At any rate, President Grévy and the Ministers seem to have thought they would be more comfortable at Paris without having a satellite of Boulanger as Governor, and they have insisted upon declining Saussier's resignation. From the way people talk, one

[365] Eu is a commune located in the Seine-Maritime department in the Normandy region of northern France. It is situated near the coast, specifically in the eastern part of the department, close to the border with Picardy.

[366] Félix-Gustave Saussier (1828 – 1905) was a French general, Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour and Military Medallist. After graduating from Saint-Cyr, he took part in the campaigns in Algeria, the Crimea, Italy and Mexico, fought in the War of 1870 and was commander-in-chief of the second expeditionary force in Tunisia from July 1881. Promoted to brigadier general in 1871 and then general of division in 1878, he was a member and then vice-president of the Superior War Council from 1889 to 1897.

would think that the questions were whether Boulanger is aiming at being a Cromwell or a Monk, and if a Monk, which dynasty he will take up.

There is a good deal of alarm here about foreign affairs. The reports of a large concentration of Russian troops in Bessarabia are supposed to confirm other indications that Russia is meditating a revenge for the check she has sustained with regard to Bulgaria. This, it is

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supposed, must bring Austria into the field. Moreover, Bismarck does not seem to be in an amiable mood towards France; and with or without instigation from him, Germans talk as if war was inevitable.

Then the Republic here has lasted sixteen years, and that is about the time which it takes to make the French tired of a form of Government. The Republic has not been successful financially, and trade and agriculture are not prosperous, nor is the reputation of the Republican administration high for purity or efficiency.

So there is plenty to croak about for those who are inclined to croak.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Paris, July 13, 1886.

The regular session of the French Chambers is to be closed the day after to-morrow, and the Chambers are to spend to-morrow at the Review at Longchamps, and I suppose to take part in the other nuisances which makes Paris insupportable on a National Fête day. I conclude the Chambers will come back in October for an extra session as usual. In fact, they have not yet voted the Budget; or, I had almost said, any useful measure. In Commercial matters and indeed in everything relating to intercourse with other countries, they have shown the narrowest and most exclusive spirit. Their great feat has been the law for the persecution of the Princes, which seems to be carried out as harshly as possible. I should not have said that the literal wording of the law necessitated or even justified the dismissal from the army of Princes who already belonged to it, but I suppose that was the intention of the legislators. The Duc d'Aumale's letter to the President is a powerful document, but was sure to lead to his expulsion, and was perhaps intended to have that effect.

Among people who ought to have good information from abroad, the alarm as to a war this autumn seems stronger than among the French politicians who confine themselves more closely

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to considering French feeling at home. Certainly it comes round to one in various ways from Germany that war is very generally expected, or at all events talked of there. The accounts current in Germany of supposed French provocations look as if there was a party there trying to work up hostile feeling against France. An alliance between France and Russia seems to be the bugbear. I don't see symptoms at present of any war spirit in this country; but of course a quarrel between Russia and Germany would be a great temptation to French Chauvinism.

CHAPTER XVII. THE LAST YEAR'S WORK. (1886-1887)

The abhorred annual fête of July 14, 1886, possessed an interest which had been wanting previously, and has never since been renewed. This was due to the presence of a number of troops at the Longchamps Review who had just returned from Tonquin, and to the excitement caused by the first appearance of Boulanger at a big military display in Paris. Notwithstanding the inflated rubbish which was published the next day in the French press, there could not be the least doubt that the Tonquin troops were received without the slightest enthusiasm. In Paris the very word "Tonquin" was hated; the country was associated with loss of life, and with heavy taxation, and nothing could have expressed more eloquently the disenchantment produced by a Spirited Colonial Policy, than the chilling reception accorded to these returned soldiers. The enthusiasm which should have been bestowed upon these humble instruments was lavished upon the charlatan who at that moment was the most prominent and popular figure in the eye of the French public.

The military mountebank (aptly christened by Jules Ferry, "a music hall St. Arnaud"[367]) had,

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with some foresight, provided himself with a high-actioned black circus horse, and those who were present on the occasion will never forget the moment when he advanced to salute the President, and other notabilities established in the official Tribune. Only a few days before, it was currently believed, he had terrified his ministerial colleagues by appearing at a Cabinet Council in uniform, and now as he pranced backwards or forwards on the circus horse and the public yelled their acclamations, President Grévy and the uninteresting crowd of bourgeois ministers and deputies who surrounded him, seemed visibly to quiver and flinch as shuddering memories of December 2 and other *coups d'état* obtruded themselves upon their recollections.

From that day Boulanger became a dangerous man; the circus horse had done the trick; the general embodied in the public fancy the *clinquant*,[368] for which the French had so long been sighing in secret; *l'homme qui monte à cheval in place of l'homme qui monte à la tribune*,[369] and for a long time he survived even that ridicule which in France is supposed to kill more effectively than elsewhere. Even when he engaged in a duel with an elderly and short-sighted civilian, M. Floquet,[370] and was decisively worsted, he continued to remain a popular hero.

Lord Rosebery, upon whom the unreasonable ill-feeling then constantly shown by the French towards England had made a painful impression, had realized in May that the Gladstone Government was doomed, and had wisely decided in consequence that a process of marking time was preferable to embarking upon anything in the nature of a heroic policy. Upon his retirement and the formation of a new administration,

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[367] This does not refer to a saint but to Armand-Jacques Leroy de Saint-Arnaud (1798 – 1854) who was a French soldier and Marshal of France. He served as French Minister of War until the Crimean War when he became Commander-in-chief of the army of the East. He was a key conspirator in the 1851 French coup d'état which dissolved the National Assembly, granted dictatorial powers to Napoleon III and caused the dissolution of the French Second Republic.
[368] Flashyness
[369] The man who rides a horse in place of the man who mounts the tribune,
[370] Charles Floquet (1828 – 1896) was a French politician whose deep attachment to the republic led him to become an antagonist of the political aspirations of Gen. Georges Boulanger. On July 13th 1888, Floquet and Boulanger met in a duel, and, although much older, Floquet severely wounded his opponent. The Floquet government was overturned in February 1889, when a proposal for constitutional reform was defeated.

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Lord Lyons experienced what was probably the greatest surprise of his life in the shape of the following letter from Lord Salisbury. In order to reinforce its arguments the late Lord Currie,[371] then Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, was sent over with it to Paris.

Confidential. July 26, 1886.

I accepted yesterday the Queen's commission to form a Government. It is a task full of difficulties; and I would have gladly seen Lord Hartington undertake it. This, however, he could not be induced to do; and the duty falls upon me. One of my first thoughts is to provide a Foreign Secretary for the new Government: for I could not, with any hope of carrying it through successfully, repeat the experiment of last summer by uniting the Foreign Secretaryship with the Premiership.

There is no one possessing the experience and knowledge of Foreign Affairs which you have, and no one whose appointment would exercise so great a moral authority in Europe. And we certainly have not in our political ranks any one who could claim a tithe of the fitness for the office which every one would acknowledge in your case. I earnestly hope the proposal may be not unacceptable to you. If that should happily be the case, a great difficulty in our way will have been most successfully removed.

As there is much to be said on the matter which it would be too long to write, Currie has very kindly undertaken to take this letter over and discuss the matter with you. We have talked it over very fully.

If you should be in need of any interval of repose, I could easily take the seals for a few weeks.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris. July 27, 1886.

Currie brought me your letter early this morning. In answer to it I sent you at 11.30 a.m. the following telegram:—

I am very much gratified, and I am very grateful for the kind consideration with which

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your proposal is accompanied, but my age and the state of my health make it quite impossible for me to undertake the office.

I hope I need not assure you that I am fully sensible of the kindness of your letter, and that if I cannot feel that I merit all you say of me, I am at least grateful for your good opinion.

[371] Philip Henry Wodehouse Currie, 1st Baron Currie (1834 – 1906) known as Sir Philip Currie between 1885 and 1899, was a British diplomat. He was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1888/9 to 1893, Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1893 to 1898 and Ambassador to Italy from 1898 to 1902.

> The truth is, that I could not now undertake new and laborious duties with any confidence that I could discharge them efficiently. I feel the need of rest, and I am not equal to beginning a new life of hard work. I could not conscientiously assume the great responsibility which would be thrown upon me.

If the post of Foreign Secretary has ever been offered during the last hundred years to any other person outside the ranks of orthodox party politicians the secret has been well kept, and it might perhaps be suggested that few people would be found with sufficient strength of mind to decline so glittering a prize. Lord Lyons, however, as is sufficiently evident, found no difficulty in at once deciding upon the refusal of an offer which the ordinary mediocrity would have accepted with avidity. In the above letter he founded his refusal upon grounds of age and ill-health, and in private he used to express the opinion that after the age of forty a man's faculties began and continued to deteriorate. But it is not in the least likely that he would have accepted the honour which it was proposed to bestow upon him, at any period of his life. His extreme modesty and diffidence have already been dwelt upon, but a more valuable quality than these is a man's realization of his own limitations, and it is probable that Lord Lyons, by the exercise of his exceptionally impartial judgment, was able to form a more correct opinion as to his own potentialities than Lord

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Salisbury. A thorough and profound knowledge of foreign politics is not the sole necessary qualification of an English Foreign Secretary; had such been the case, Lord Lyons would have been an ideal occupant of the post; but in England, where the value of Ministers is gauged chiefly by the fallacious test of oratorical capacity, the Foreign Secretary is constantly obliged to make speeches in defence of or in explanation of his policy, and although the House of Lords is the most long-suffering and good-natured assembly in the world, it would have been no easy task for a man of sixty-nine, who had never put two sentences together in public, to suddenly appear in Parliament as the representative of one of the most important departments, to say nothing of public meetings, deputations, banquets, *etc.* It may also be doubted whether, in spite of his many admirable qualities, he was really adapted for the post. All his life, he had been merely an instrument—a highly efficient instrument—of the existing Government, and had received instructions, which had invariably been carried out with singular skill and intelligence. But the responsibility had not been his, and as Foreign Secretary the initiative as well as the responsibility which would have rested upon him might have imposed too formidable a strain upon one of so cautious a temperament. Taking into consideration these doubts, his advanced age, failing health, and the effect of depression caused by the recent death of his much loved sister, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, the refusal of the Foreign Office by Lord Lyons was only an additional instance of that robust common sense which was one of his most pronounced characteristics. Lord Rosebery, at all events, thought that he had decided wisely.

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Lord Rosebery to Lord Lyons.
Dalmeny, Aug. 10, 1886.

> As my Foreign Office episode is at an end, I write a line of good-bye, not as a Minister, but on the footing of what I hope I may call friendship.
>
> My six months' experience has led me to the conviction that our relations with France are really more troublesome than with any other Power. She is always wanting

something of us which it is impossible to give her, and she then says plaintively, "You never do anything for me." She is quite oblivious of the fact that she never loses the opportunity of playing us a trick. Witness the secret expedition to the New Hebrides. Nothing would have induced me to go on with any one of the negotiations with Waddington until they had removed their troops from those islands. Whenever he asked for an answer about anything, I always turned the conversation round to that interesting spot.

With this conviction, therefore, it has been a great comfort to feel that you were at Paris.

I am not surprised that you did not care about my succession! It is a weary post.

Lord Lyons to Lord Rosebery.
Heron's Ghyll, Uckfield,[372] Aug. 17, 1886.

Your friendly letter has followed me here and has much gratified me.

I think you must look back with great satisfaction to your time at the Foreign Office. You have certainly won golden opinions from your subordinates and from the world at large, which is perhaps a less competent judge. My own official intercourse with you was certainly both very pleasant to me and very satisfactory.

I attribute the difficulties with France more to the inevitable consequences of our coming into contact with the French in all parts of the world, than to any ill-will on either side, although I do not pretend to say that the state of feeling is what I could wish it to be.

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Independently of any other considerations, I felt altogether too old to undertake the Foreign Office. I was so convinced of this, that I regarded it as what the French call an objection *préjudicielle* to entertaining the question at all.

The post which Lord Lyons had declined was accepted by Lord Iddesleigh,[373] who had just been removed from the House of Commons, and, as was only natural, it is evident that he was in the habit of consulting Lord Salisbury before taking any step of importance. In October, 1886, with the concurrence of Lord Salisbury, Lord Lyons was instructed to approach the French Government on the question of Egypt, and to explain the conditions under which it would be possible to terminate the British military occupation. There seems to be absolutely no doubt that Her Majesty's Government were perfectly sincere and honestly desirous of carrying out the promises that had been made at various times, and as subsequent history showed, it was the misguided opposition of France and Russia which was as much responsible as anything else for the permanent British occupation of Egypt.

[372] Heron's Ghyll is a hamlet in the Wealden district of East Sussex in England. It is located between Crowborough and Uckfield

[373] Stafford Henry Northcote, 1st Earl of Iddesleigh (1818 – 1887) known as Sir Stafford Northcote, 8th Baronet from 1851 to 1885, was a British Conservative politician. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1874 and 1880, First Lord of the Treasury between 1885 and 1886 and Foreign Secretary between 1886 and 1887.

Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Oct. 22, 1886.

In my previous letter of to-day I have told you what M. de Freycinet said to me about the Suez Canal Convention. I had a long interview with him, but though I gave him plenty of opportunities, he did not say one other word about Egypt. This being the case, I thought it prudent to abstain, at all events at this first interview, from saying anything on my side. So far

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then I have not made known to him any part of the contents of your letter to Lord Salisbury of the 18th or of his telegraphic answer.

The fact is, that from what I have made out since I came back here, I am led to think that the French Government have now good reason to doubt whether they would get Bismarck's support if they raised the Egyptian question with a view to embarrass us. This being the case, they are very much hesitating to do so, and are on the look-out for signs of our impressions on the subject, and would interpret any appearance of unusual anxiety on our part, or any fresh offers of concessions from us, simply as indications that we still thought Germany might join against us. If the French Government are not pretty sure of help and sympathy from abroad, they will probably not stir in the matter.

In the meantime, however, the press has been strongly excited, probably by d'Aunay and Charmes.[374] There is a very nasty article, principally about the financial part of the Egyptian question, in the *Débuts*[375] this morning.

I shall perhaps be able to see my way more clearly in a day or two. In the meantime I am disposed to think the most prudent plan will be to be reserved and firm about Egypt, but not to display anxiety on the subject.

The idea of Lord Salisbury, speaking generally, was that a somewhat distant date of evacuation should be foreshadowed; that if evacuation, as was fully intended, should be carried out, some return should be expected for the expenditure of British blood and treasure, and that the Suez Canal difficulty should be settled without further delay. He considered that the negotiations should be carried on with the Porte (Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had already been despatched on this mission), and that confidential communications should be made to France and Germany.

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[374] Marie François, known as Francis Charmes (1848 – 1916) was a French journalist, diplomat, civil servant, politician and academician. His political writings created much interest, and in 1880 the French government appointed him to the post of assistant director of the political department of the Foreign Office. In 1885 he became head of the department, and remained in the Foreign Office until 1889.

[375] There was no newspaper or periodical of this title but the term can also be used for a column by a new writer in an established paper. It could also refer to one of the new publications such as the early years (débuts) of *Le Matin*, founded in 1884 or *La Nouvelle Revue*, founded in 1879 by Juliette Adam. *Le Petit Journal* reached massive circulation in the 1880s

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Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Oct. 26, 1886.

> I shall be very anxious to know what line Waddington took on his return to his post, and particularly what, if anything, he said about Egypt.
>
> Freycinet is the man chiefly responsible for the refusal of France to join in our expedition to Egypt, and this no doubt makes him very anxious to gain for himself the credit of some striking success in getting England out of that country. So far as I can make out here, the attempts that have been made to get the Powers to unite in calling for a general Conference upon Egyptian affairs have not met with much success. If Bismarck decidedly opposes attempts of this kind, they will no doubt be abandoned. The Press continue to urge strong measures against our continuing in Egypt, and is not measured in its language.
>
> The autumn session is often fatal to French Ministers. I recollect Gambetta's saying to me not long before his own fall: "*En automne les feuilles tombent et les porte-feuilles aussi.*"[376]

It is more than likely that the instructions which M. Waddington received about this period were of a disagreeable nature. A well-known French Ambassador once remarked to me some years later, that the London Embassy was no very desirable post from the French diplomatist's point of view. "We are sent there with the mission of getting the English out of Egypt, and the thing cannot be done!"

Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Nov. 23, 1886.

> Freycinet's aim seems to be to improve his own position in the Chambers and in the country by obtaining our withdrawal from Egypt, and of course the object cannot be attained unless he can

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> make it appear that the withdrawal is his doing. Hence his strong desire that we should negotiate with him and his dislike to our negotiating with Turkey or any other Power.
>
> The crushing defeat of the Right in the elections in the Department of the Nord is another proof of their blindness in misusing the chance they had after the general election. They might possibly have led gradually up to a restoration by giving strength to Conservative principles and measures. They could only discredit themselves by joining the extreme Radicals and attempting to produce mischief and confusion.
>
> The Germans are either very dilatory, or they have some *arrière pensée*[377] about the Zanzibar affair. Yesterday afternoon Münster was still without any instructions to make the joint invitation to the French.

[376] In autumn, the leaves fall and so do the wallets.

Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Dec. 3, 1886.

> You will see by my despatch that Freycinet has again attacked me about Egypt. He wants the negotiation to go through him, and if possible to be made with him, independently of the Turks, or at least virtually in conjunction with us. I have not yet seen any symptoms of his being anxious really to help us in Egyptian matters; and I am not generally favourable to carrying on parallel negotiations, or the same negotiation in different places. The danger of informal conversations between Freycinet and me is that, however cautious I may be, he may somehow or other find occasion to quote me, as being more *coulant* than you. At any rate, if I had to talk to him it would be very necessary for you to tell me very exactly how far I could go: and above all, that I should be guarded from holding any language which might by any possibility be embarrassing to the line circumstances might make it advisable for Her Majesty's Government to take in Parliament afterwards.
>
> I was long enough at Constantinople to see that no dependence whatever was to be placed upon

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> what the Porte told an Ambassador about his colleagues. Still I cannot say that the Turkish revelation about the communications the Porte affects to receive from the French and Russian Ambassadors about Egypt and about us, are, in the face of them, improbable. At any rate, our views must be much nearer than those we now have to the French ideas, before we shall get any real help from France at the Porte.
>
> I write, as you know, in ignorance of Wolff's opinion, as he did not stop here on his way home.
>
> Freycinet's defeat in the Chamber this afternoon is serious because it followed a strong speech from himself against the *Sous-Préfet* abolition, but he has wonderful skill in patching things up.

Freycinet in December was defeated by one of those combinations of Royalist and Radicals which were not uncommon in French politics, and although the absurdity of the situation was obvious to every one, insisted on placing his resignation and that of the Cabinet in President Grévy's hands. A change of Government was so useless that even those who had combined to overthrow Freycinet endeavoured to persuade him to reconsider his determination. He remained obdurate, however, and the President, casting about for a successor, pitched at first upon M. Floquet, a strong Radical who was particularly obnoxious to the Russian Government.

Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Dec. 7, 1886.

> The chances seem to be in favour of Floquet being Prime Minister. He is of the section of the Chamber called *Gauche radical*, that is to say, he falls just short of the most extreme Left.

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[377] Ulterior motive.

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> Who would be his Minister for Foreign Affairs and what would be his foreign policy I do not pretend to say. The incident in his life most talked about is his having cried out, "*Vive la Pologne!*"[378] and used some expressions taken as disrespectful to the late Emperor of Russia, when His Majesty was at the Palais de Justice, on his visit to Paris during the Exhibition of 1867. The Russian Ambassadors have, I believe, declined or avoided exchanging courtesies with him when he has since been in situations, such as that of *Préfet de la Seine*, and President of the Chamber of Deputies, which have brought him into communication with the rest of the diplomatic body. Russia at this moment is paying so much court to France that she might perhaps get over this.
>
> The Left of the Chamber have hitherto been opposed to the Tonquin and Madagascar Expeditions and to an adventurous and Chauvin policy altogether; but if in power they would probably go in for pleasing the Chamber and the bulk of the people out of doors even more unreservedly than Freycinet did.
>
> I should have regretted Freycinet's fall more, if he had not taken up the Egyptian question in the way he did. Our communications with him on that subject were becoming very uncomfortable. I am not very sanguine, however, about their being more satisfactory with his successor.

The notion, however, of having M. Floquet as Prime Minister frightened every one except the extreme Radicals so much that that gentleman was unable to form an administration, and the choice of the President ultimately fell upon a M. Goblet,[379] who was Radical enough for most people and not much hampered by pledges and declarations. The office of Foreign Minister remained vacant, but, much to the relief of Lord Lyons, it was definitely refused by M. Duclerc. Lord Lyons had, by this time, had no less than twenty-one different French Foreign Ministers to deal with, and of these Duclerc was the one he liked least.

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No suitable person seemed to be available, and it was in vain that, one after the other French diplomatists were solicited to accept the office. At length a Foreign Minister was found in M. Flourens,[380] a brother of the well-known Communist who was killed in 1871. M. Flourens was completely ignorant of everything concerning foreign affairs, and his appointment was perhaps an unconscious tribute to the English practice of putting civilians at the head of our naval and military administrations.

Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh.
Paris, Dec. 21, 1886.

> I have not yet had the means of improving my acquaintance with Flourens, but I expect to have some conversation with him to-morrow. He had not a word to say

[378] Long live Poland! In 1886, Poland was not an independent country but was partitioned between Prussia, Austria, and Russia.

[379] René Marie Goblet (1828 – 1905) was a French politician, Prime Minister of France from 16 Dec 1886 until 30 May 1887. Defeated on the budget in May 1887, his government resigned; but he returned to office next year as foreign minister in the radical administration of Charles Floquet.

[380] Émile Flourens (1841 – 1920) was a French politician, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Third Republic. He was son of the biologist Jean Pierre Flourens, and the younger brother of Gustave Flourens, a general of the Paris Commune.

about Bulgaria when I saw him on Friday. He did not seem to have known anything about foreign affairs before he took office, nor to expect to stay long enough in office to become acquainted with them. Some people suppose that he is to make way for the return of Freycinet as soon as the Budget is passed. Anyway, the Goblet Ministry is only the Freycinet Ministry over again without the strongest man, who was undoubtedly Freycinet himself. When Parliament meets, things will be just as they were. There will still be in the Chamber 180 Deputies on the Right, ready to vote any way in order to make mischief and discredit the Republic; about 100 Deputies on the extreme Left, intimidating the Government and forcing it into extreme Radical measures, they being able to count in all emergencies upon getting the vote of the Right to turn out a Ministry; and lastly there will be 300 remaining deputies, who cannot agree enough amongst themselves to form a majority that can be relied upon, who do not at all like violent radical measures, but who are too nervously afraid of unpopularity to show resolution in opposing the extreme Left.

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So far the Comte de Paris's declaration seems simply to have made the ultra-Monarchists furiously angry, and not to have induced any great part of the Right to think of taking the wise course it recommends.

I do not see any outward signs here of the strained relations between France and Germany and the imminent war between the two countries which the Standard announces. But it is true that among the French themselves some suspicion and distrust of Boulanger's aims are becoming more apparent.

The hackneyed saying: *Plus cela change, plus c'est la même chose*, was never more appropriate than in the case of the change from a Freycinet to a Goblet Government; one section of uninspiring ministers had merely given place to another, and no one in France seemed in any way the better for it.

On New Year's Dav, 1887, President Grévy broke out into Latin in congratulating the Diplomatic Corps on the already long continuance of peace, but a more accurate view of the situation was expressed by a French newspaper in the sentence: "*Jamais année nouvelle ne s'est ouverte au milieu d'autant de promesses de paix et de préparatifs de guerre que l'année 1887.*"[381] "I do not know," wrote Lord Lyons, "which is the nation which wishes for war. France certainly does not, she is, on the contrary, very much afraid of it. But one would feel more confidence in peace if there appeared less necessity in all countries to be perpetually giving pacific assurances. There are rumours of a defensive alliance between Russia and France. The bond of union between the two countries, if it exists, must be simply a common hatred of Germany."

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At the beginning of the year 1887, the Germans professed to be in dread of an attack from France, while the French complained that they were threatened by Germany. In France it was believed that in August 1886, preparations had been actually made to mobilize the German army, and the language held by Boulanger was to the effect that the military power of France would be found to be very different to what it was in 1870. Meanwhile an unsuccessful

[381] Never has a new year opened in the midst of so many promises of peace and preparations for war as the year 1887.

attempt had been made by those two old Parliamentary hands, Freycinet and Ferry, to get rid of Boulanger, who was now becoming to be considered as equally dangerous both in France and Germany.

It was probably the apprehension caused by the presence of this adventurer, whose incapacity was as yet imperfectly realized, that was responsible for the state of tension and alarm which prevailed in France during January and February, 1887.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.[382]
Paris, Jan. 18, 1887.

> I saw M. Grévy this morning, and found him, as it seemed to me, really alarmed at the possibility of France being attacked by Germany. The only overt act he spoke of, on the part of Germany, was the increase of the strength of the German garrisons in the neighbourhood of the French frontier. Grévy himself is most peaceful, and quite sincerely so. His natural character and temperament, and his interest too, tend that way. He would hardly be able to hold his own as President in case of war, and there is very little chance of France going to war as long as he is the head of the State. Flourens also spoke to me of danger to France and Germany when I saw him this afternoon.
>
> I think the alarm of Grévy and Flourens was sincere, though I do not share it myself at this moment.

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> In France there is no desire to go to war, and I doubt whether she is able, or at all events fancies herself able, to cope with Germany.
>
> It is perhaps more difficult to keep her on good terms with us. Egypt is a sore which will not heal. There was a nasty discussion about Newfoundland Fisheries in the Senate yesterday. I send you a full report officially. Happily, so far, it has not had much echo in the public.

Alarm with respect to Germany continued to grow, and was fed by private communications from Bismarck, who sent by unofficial agents messages to the effect that "he was all for peace, but that it was impossible for him to stand the way that France was going on." These messages came through Bleichröder[383] and members of the haute finance in Paris, who expressed the opinion that if Boulanger remained in office, war with Germany was certain. The haute finance is by no means invariably correct in its political judgment, but it seems highly probable that the war scares prevalent in 1887 were promulgated with the object of getting rid of the troublesome firebrand upon whom so much public attention was concentrated. The position of Boulanger, however, was a strong one, and to dislodge him was a work of no slight difficulty. Ever since the day when he had been taken into Freycinet's Cabinet he had contrived by adroit advertising to keep himself before the public,

[382] Lord Salisbury had taken over the Foreign Office upon the death of Lord Iddesleigh on 12th January 1887. (LN)

[383] Gerson von Bleichröder (1822 – 1893) was a Jewish German banker and close confidant of Otto von Bismarck. He served as Bismarck's financial agent, especially when the Prussian king required financial independence from the United Prussian Diet during the critical period of German unification.

and to distinguish himself from his colleagues as exercising a separate and commanding influence in the Chambers and with the public. In the army he had managed to make himself feared by the higher officers and assiduously courted popularity with the rank and file. In the political world he had at

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first been regarded as being ultra democratic, but now excited suspicion by paying court to the Conservatives, and by endeavouring, not entirely without success, to obtain their good will.

On the whole, there was a very general impression that he was ambitious, self-seeking, and thoroughly unscrupulous; but there were few means of forming an opinion as to what his special plans really were, if indeed he had formed any. Still he successfully flattered the belief of the French that they were fast emerging from the eclipse in which their military power and reputation were involved in 1870, and there were not wanting those who asserted that he was inclined to seek a war, in the hope of conducting it with success, and so establishing himself as a military dictator. Others, influenced by their wishes, indulged in the hope that he might be meditating a Monarchist restoration under an Orleanist or Bonapartist Dynasty. Unsubstantial and improbable as these suppositions may have been, it was plain that in the army and among the public at large there prevailed a vague notion that he might be the man of the future, a notion fostered by the absence of any one recognized in France as possessing conspicuous and commanding abilities, and by the craving for a real personality after a long succession of second-class politicians.

The embarrassment with regard to Germany created by the presence of so disturbing an element in the Government as Boulanger did not, contrary to what might have been expected, tend to improve Anglo-French relations, and a letter from Lord Salisbury expresses in forcible terms his dissatisfaction at difficulties which seemed to have been gratuitously created.

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Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Feb. 5, 1887.

> The French are inexplicable. One would have thought that under existing circumstances it was not necessary to *make* enemies—that there were enough provided for France by nature just now. But she seems bent upon aggravating the patient beast of burden that lives here by every insult and worry her ingenuity can devise. In Newfoundland she has issued orders which, if faithfully executed, must bring the French and English fleets into collision. At the New Hebrides, in spite of repeated promises, she will not stir. In Egypt she baulks a philanthropic change out of pure "cussedness." In Morocco she is engaged in appropriating the territory by instalments, threatening to reach Tangier at no distant date. And now, just as we are entering on pacific negotiations, the French Government sent orders to do precisely that which, a month ago, Waddington promised they should not do, namely run up the French flag at Dongorita.[384] It is very difficult to prevent oneself from wishing for another Franco-German war to put a stop to this incessant vexation.

[384] Dongorita. A town on the Somali coast. (LN)

We have protested earnestly about Dongorita, which has more the air of a studied insult than any of the others. As to the Newfoundland Fisheries, if they execute their threats, they render the passage of a Bait Bill next year a matter of certainty. We have strained the good will of the colonists very far in refusing to allow it this year. The other matters will, I suppose, be the subject of slow negotiations.

D'Herbette[385] has made at Berlin more practical suggestions as to naming a date for the annexation of Egypt than we have yet had from the French Government. I hope the large majorities will persuade the French that the national feeling is in this instance not in favour of scuttle.

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All that Lord Lyons, who was always most anxious to make the best case he could for the French, was able to say in their defence, was that he hoped that it was an exceptionally dark moment, and that there must be a change shortly for the better.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Feb. 18, 1887.

The French seem to be more confident of peace and altogether in better spirits than they were a few days ago, but I do not know that they have any positive facts or distinct information to go upon. The hopes of a certain number of them rest upon the belief that the Goblet Ministry is likely to be upset as soon as the Budget is finally disposed of, and that thus Boulanger will be got rid of.

The newspaper accounts of Wolff's mission to Constantinople have brought Egypt on the tapis again, and as anxiety about Germany falls into the background, irritation against England comes prominently forward. There are, however, some symptoms of a return among wiser men to more prudent and reasonable views respecting the relations of France towards England. These men are alarmed especially respecting the hostility towards France which is apparent in Italy, and they see the folly of making enemies on all sides. If there should be a new Ministry it might possibly pursue a policy more friendly towards England with regard to Egypt and other matters. The Egyptian question would no doubt become less difficult if a change should remove M. Charmes from the Foreign Office and put into his place, as Political Director there, a man less prejudiced about Egypt.

In the meantime much amusement has been caused by an escapade of Madame Flourens. On Saturday last she called upon Countess Marie Münster,[386] and found

[385] Jules Gabriel Herbette (1839 – 1901) was a French diplomat, French consul, minister plenipotentiary, chief of staff and director of personnel at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then French ambassador to Berlin (1886–1896).

[386] Countess Marie von Münster (1849 – 1933) was a prominent figure in European high society and the diplomatic world, primarily known for her role as the companion and hostess for her father, Prince Georg Herbert zu Münster. By 1886, she was living in Paris, where her father had recently been appointed the German Ambassador to France (transferring from London in 1885). Because her father was a widower, Marie acted as the official hostess of the German Embassy. This was a critical role in 1886, as Franco-German relations were incredibly strained following the Franco-Prussian War. She was noted for her poise and her ability to navigate the delicate social circles of the French Third Republic. (*Google Gemini*)

with her Count Hoyos,[387] the Austrian Ambassador. Madame Flourens announced loudly that her husband had resigned the Foreign Office, because Boulanger had attempted, without his knowledge, to send a letter direct

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to the Emperor of Russia by the French Military Attaché, who was to start for St. Petersburg. Hoyos fetched Münster himself out of an adjoining room, to hear the story. Madame Flourens, it appeared, supposed that Flourens was on the point of announcing his resignation to the Chamber of Deputies. It turned out, however, that Flourens had made a scene with Boulanger at the Council of Ministers, had gone away in a huff, but had been subsequently calmed by M. Grévy and M. Goblet; no letter to the Emperor had been sent, and the resignation had been withdrawn. The story had of course spread all over the town. In defiance of truth, a communiqué contradicting it was inserted in the Agence Havas, with no other effect than that of discrediting the communiqués which the Government is apt to put into the Havas.

There is so little mention of women in Lord Lyons's correspondence that Madame Flourens's indiscretion comes as a welcome relief, although in all probability it got the unfortunate Count Münster into trouble with Bismarck, and afforded an excuse for fresh bullying. Count Münster, who had been for many years Ambassador in London, where he had been extremely popular, found the transfer to Paris singularly unpleasant, more especially as in order to make things thoroughly uncomfortable for him, Bismarck had provided an entirely new Embassy Staff.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Feb. 19, 1887.

We are thinking of renewing our negotiations with respect to the Suez Canal in a serious spirit. But before we sign anything we shall want some satisfaction about Dongorita and the New Hebrides, and possibly about the Corvée.[388]

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I think it was very shabby of the French to open the Dongorita affair upon us, just after we had made so material a concession upon the subject of the bait in Newfoundland.

Waddington is gloomy and rather ill-tempered—either from the fogs or the crisis. I have not had any further talk with him about Egypt lately. I think he avoids the subject. Wolff tells me that the French *Chargé d'Affaires* at Constantinople is a mere creature of Nelidoff's.[389] Our negotiations are dragging on with little prospect of

[387] Count Ladislaus de Hoyos-Sprinzenstein (1834–1901) was an Austrian nobleman and politician. He was the Austrian ambassador to France from 1883 to 1894. Following the Franco-Prussian War, France was isolated and looking for allies, while Austria-Hungary was firmly tied to Germany through the Dual Alliance. Ladislaus had the difficult job of maintaining "polite but cool" relations with the French Republic while ensuring that French-Russian rapprochement didn't threaten Austrian interests in the Balkans. He is not to be confused with Ernst Karl Heinrich, Count Hoyos-Sprinzenstein (1830 – 1903) who was his brother. (*Google Gemini* and *Wikipedia*)

[388] Corvée is a form of unpaid forced labour that is intermittent in nature, lasting for limited periods of time, typically only a certain number of days of work each year.

[389] Aleksandr Ivanovich Nelidov (1838 – 1910) was a Russian diplomat. He entered diplomatic service in 1855. He was Secretary to the Russian embassies at Athens, Munich and Vienna. In 1872

success. We are willing to fix a distant date for our leaving, if we receive a treaty power to go back whenever internal or external security are threatened. The tone in which both France and Turkey have received this proposal may be best expressed by the colloquial phrase "Damn their impudence!" I do not expect to carry what I want at present, but before modifying these terms, I should like to know what is going to happen in Europe.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was at this time at Constantinople endeavouring to negotiate the Convention with regard to the evacuation of Egypt, and the French and Russian Embassies were actively engaged in the senseless opposition which eventually prevented the ratification of the Convention. The above letter from Lord Salisbury is an additional proof of the honest desire of the British Government to carry out the rash undertakings which had been given in the past.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, Feb. 25, 1887.

The general feeling here seems to be that war has been escaped, but still there is a good deal of discontent against the foreign policy of the Goblet Cabinet. It seems to be considered that

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the understanding between Italy, Austria, and Germany is as good as made, and that the result of it will be to put an end to any fear of war between Russia and Austria. On the other hand, it is thought that Russia will feel it too necessary to watch Germany for it to be prudent of her to make an alliance with France, while without the alliance of Russia, France of course cannot face Germany, particularly as she has almost hostility to expect from Italy and no great sympathy to look for from England. The policy which has thus isolated France from the other Powers is seen to have been a mistake, and there seems to be a disposition to throw the blame on the Goblet Ministry. If the Goblet Ministry should fall, it is not improbable that the new Government might take the line of being conciliatory to the neighbouring countries and to Italy and England in particular. I am not very sanguine about this, but if in the meantime no irritating questions come to excite public opinion against us, there may possibly be a chance that a change of Ministry here would make our relations with France smoother.

My hopes that a change towards England may be in contemplation have perhaps been strengthened by a visit which I have just had from a person wholly unconnected with the French Ministry who evidently came to ascertain what were the particular points with regard to which the relations between France and England might be improved. I said that instead of thwarting us in our endeavours to improve the condition of Egypt and put it in a state to stand alone, the French might help us; and they could not expect comfortable relations with us if they endeavoured to stir up other Powers to make difficulties with us about Egypt. I mentioned also the New Hebrides question, which most certainly ought and might be settled at once. I alluded also to those

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he became Councillor to the Russian embassy in Constantinople. He was Ambassador to Saxony in 1879, to Italy (1897–1903) and to France (1903–1910).

various matters all over the world which might be treated in a cordial and not in an antagonistic spirit.

P.S.—I have strong reasons for thinking it very important that Waddington should not have the least inkling of my having had the above interview, or any communication of the kind.

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Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
Feb. 26, 1887.

I will not mention to Waddington the interview which you have had as to English grounds of complaint. I have not seen him for ten days: he must have taken huff at something.

I think, as the French are coming to their senses, it might be well to mention unofficially to Flourens that I am quite ready to resume the negotiations about the Suez Canal; and that I have good hope of bringing it to a successful issue, but that I am hindered by the flag that is floating at Dongorita, and by the delay of the French in performing their promises as regards the New Hebrides. We are being a good deal reproached here, on account of our apparent submission to this breach of faith. If these two matters are corrected, I shall find it possible, and shall be very glad to renew the Suez Canal discussion either at Paris or here.

I have seen Karolyi[390] to-day—an unusual occurrence—and for the first time have had the admission from him that a war with Russia was not an impossible contingency.

The Russians are very quiet; and the negotiations about Bulgaria do not really advance a bit.

M. Flourens, in spite of his complete inexperience, seems to have realized the simple fact that it was not advisable to quarrel with England just at the moment when relations with Germany were in a critical condition; but unhappily the public did not appear to be in an accommodating mood. The statements published in the English press respecting the Drummond Wolff mission had caused great irritation, and what was perhaps more serious, had alarmed the French again about the security of the coupons. As long as they

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felt sure that the coupons would be paid regularly, and that there was no fear of future reduction, they were reasonably patient, unless some specially severe blow, such as a reduction of the numbers and salaries of French officials, as compared with English, was struck at their amour propre. Now, however, they were beset with the fear that, under what they considered to be English mismanagement, they were about to lose their money as well as their influence.

[390] Count Alajos Károlyi de Nagykároly (1825 – 1889) was an Austro-Hungarian diplomat. He was assigned successively to Austrian embassies at various European capitals and was Austrian ambassador to London for ten years from 1878.

In March the Goblet Ministry was already in difficulties, and it was believed that Freycinet was likely to return to power, although what the precise advantages were of these continual changes, no one was capable of explaining.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
March 8, 1887.

> By taking credit to himself at the expense of his predecessors, in the interpellation yesterday, Goblet has stirred up the bile of a large party in the Chamber, and the determination to turn his Cabinet out, if possible, has revived with fresh vigour. It is supposed that the attempts will be made as soon as the Corn Duties Bill is disposed of. It seems to be thought that, if it succeeds, Freycinet must be Prime Minister; but there appears to be a strong feeling against his having the Foreign Office again. He is thought to have got France into uncomfortable relations with many of his neighbours. In the treatment of the Egyptian question he is believed to have sacrificed cordiality with England to a desire to regain the popularity he had lost by the policy which led to England's occupying her present position in Egypt; while his attempt to get up an opposition to England on the part of the European Powers and his worrying way of dealing himself with the British Government about Egypt, are thought simply to have excited public opinion on both sides of the Channel and to have provoked ill will, without in the least

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> improving the position of France. There can be no doubt that Freycinet looked upon a success with regard to Egypt as a personal necessity for himself, and was much influenced in his policy towards England by this feeling.
>
> It is apprehended that unless the prestige of Boulanger is put on high again by strong language from Germany, there will be no difficulty in obtaining, as a matter of course, his fall, with the rest of the Cabinet of which he is a part. M. Grévy is believed to be very anxious to be rid of him.
>
> I hear on good authority that the Russians have been trying again, though without success, to come to a special understanding with the French Government.

To say that M. Grévy was very anxious to be rid of Boulanger was probably an understatement, for he could not conceivably have desired anything so ardently. But the "Music Hall St. Arnaud" was by no means at the end of his tether, and had contrived to advertise himself by egregious conduct with regard to the Army Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. That Committee had drawn up a military Bill, based upon three years' service, and Boulanger, on the pretext that it was 'not sufficiently faithful to democratic principles,' had, without consulting any of his colleagues, written a letter condemning the provisions of the bill and proposing something quite different. This letter was thoughtfully communicated to the press before it reached the Committee, and the outraged members of the Committee as well as his colleagues were at last goaded into resistance. The Chamber condemned the attitude of the General towards the sacrosanct representatives of the nation; the General himself beat a hasty and prudent retreat under cover of an apology; the Moderate Republicans denounced him as a would-be dictator, and the Ultra-Radicals accused

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him of cowardice in consequence of his apology. Most men under the circumstances would have felt disposed to resign office, but in the case of Boulanger it was probably immaterial to him whether he was blamed or praised, so long as he could keep his name before the public.

It was, and probably is still, a regulation in the British Diplomatic Service, that its members should retire at the age of seventy, and, as a rule, an Ambassador who had attained that age, usually considered himself fit to discharge his duties for a further period. Lord Lyons, however, was an exception. His seventieth birthday fell due in April, and a month beforehand he wrote to announce that he wished to resign.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, March 22, 1887.

> Towards the end of the next month, the time will come when I shall be superannuated, and I feel very strongly that it will not come too soon. It will not be without a pang that I shall find myself no longer a diplomatic servant of the Queen, who has ever received my endeavours to obtain her approval with the most generous indulgence. But the labour and responsibility of this post are becoming too much for me, and I shall be anxious to be relieved from them when the time fixed by the regulations arrives.
>
> I need not assure you that I shall much regret the termination of the official connexion with you from which I have derived so much satisfaction.

It may not unfairly be presumed that resignations of important official posts are habitually welcomed by Governments, as they not only remedy stagnation in the public service, but frequently provide opportunities

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for political patronage. It is plain, however, that the prospect of losing Lord Lyons was looked upon by Lord Salisbury as a genuine misfortune, and he did his best to induce him to reconsider his decision.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
March 26, 1887.

> I have considered your letter of the 22nd, stating that you felt very strongly that the time of your superannuation would not come too soon; and though it was a matter of very deep regret to me to receive such an announcement from you, it was not altogether a matter of surprise; for I remembered the language you had used to me when I tried to induce you to join us as Foreign Secretary last July.
>
> The loss which the Diplomatic Service will suffer by your retirement will be profound, and, for the time, hardly possible to repair. Your presence at Paris gave to the public mind a sense of security which was the result of a long experience of your powers, and which no one else is in a position to inspire.
>
> In face of the expressions in your letter I feel as if I were almost presuming in suggesting any alternative course of action. But it struck me that possibly you might be willing to make your official career terminate with the end of your current

appointment, rather than with the precise date of superannuation. The effect of this would be to prolong your stay at Paris till next December.

My reasons from a public point of view will, I hope, strike you at once. We are passing through a very anxious European crisis. If any fateful decisions are taken this year, it will be within the next three or four months. It will add very much to our anxiety to know that the reins at Paris are in new hands, which have never held them before. This mere fact may even be an element of danger. The avalanche hangs so loosely, that any additional sensation or uneasiness may displace it. If we could avoid a change till the winter it would be a great public advantage, even if the change should be inevitable.

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I hope you will forgive me for having pressed this on you in the interests of the public service. Whatever your decision may be, I give you the warmest thanks for the kind and loyal support which you have always given to the policy which it has been my duty to carry out.

An appeal of this kind from an official chief could not well be disregarded, setting aside the fact that but few officials can have experienced the compliment of being assured that their continued service was essential to the peace of Europe. With well justified misgivings, Lord Lyons therefore consented to remain on until the end of the year, knowing perfectly well that his physical energies were on the point of exhaustion.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, March 29, 1887.

I am deeply touched by your letter of the 26th, and I feel that, after what you say in it, I should be extremely ungrateful if I were not ready to sacrifice a great deal to meet your views.

For my own part I feel that the work and responsibility here are an increasing strain both upon my mind and upon my bodily health, and I am beset with misgivings lest, even in ordinary times, I may be unable to discharge my duties with energy and efficiency, and lest, in an emergency calling for much labour, I may break down altogether. This being the case, it would undoubtedly be a great relief and comfort to me to retire on becoming superannuated towards the end of next month.

Begging you to take the misgivings into full consideration, and to be sure that they have not been conceived without good reason, and that they are strongly and very seriously felt by me, I place myself in your hands. If after giving full weight to them, you still think that it would be a

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satisfaction to you that I should continue to hold this post till the winter, and that it would be a great public advantage to avoid a change till that time, I am ready to stay on, and trusting to your indulgence to do my best.

I should, of course, look upon it as quite settled that in any case I should retire at latest when my current appointment comes to an end at the close of the present year.

> If you wish me to hold on, I must ask you what, if any, announcement respecting my retirement should be made. Up to this time I have simply stated to people who have questioned me, that nothing was definitely settled. I did not mention to any one my intention to write my letter of the 22nd expressing to you my wish to retire, nor have I made any one acquainted with my having written it, except of course Sheffield, who, as my private secretary, made a copy of it for me to keep. The question, therefore, as to announcing my retirement remains intact.
>
> I cannot conclude without once more saying how much I am gratified by the appreciation of my services expressed in your letter, and how truly I feel the kindness shown by it.

The offer was accepted by Lord Salisbury in singularly flattering terms, Queen Victoria also expressing much satisfaction at the consent of the Ambassador to remain at his post. From Lord Salisbury's language, it might be inferred that he was in some doubt as to whether his own tenure of office was likely to be prolonged.

> I have had no hesitation in availing myself of your kind consent—though you seemed to doubt whether on reflection I should do so. Of course I fully understand that you do not feel equal to the amount of exertion which you would take in a more favourable condition of health. But this circumstance will not detract from the great value of your counsel and judgment, nor from the authority which by so many years of experience you have acquired.

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> I quite understand that towards the close of the session of Parliament you will require the holiday you have been accustomed to take in recent years. I hope also to get to a bath at that time—whether I am in office or not.

Why Lord Salisbury should have spoken so doubtfully is not clear, unless instinct warned him of Miss Cass,[391] who was the first to strike a blow at the Unionist administration. At the end of March there reappeared the mysterious emissary who has been already mentioned. There are no means of actually establishing his identity, but there can be little doubt that it was M. de Chaudordy, who represented the French Foreign Office at Tours and Bordeaux during the war. M. de Chaudordy had made friends with Lord Salisbury at the time of the Constantinople Conference in 1876, and he was, therefore, a suitable person to utilize for the purpose of making advances towards a better understanding between the two Governments.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, March 29, 1887.

> In a private letter which I wrote to you on the 25th of last month, I mentioned that I had received a visit from a person wholly unconnected officially with the French

[391] Elizabeth Langley (née Cass; 1863–1956) was an English seamstress and dress designer whose mistaken arrest for prostitution in 1887 became a *cause célèbre*. In the 18th and 19th centuries it was not uncommon for girls working as seamstresses and milliners to supplement their income as ladies of the night. Lucy Worsley, in her book *Jane Austen at Home,* reports on the poor reputation this gave to all milliners and seamstresses. Elizabeth Cass had a long legal battle to defend her reputation and brought a private prosecution of PC Endacott for perjury in reporting that he had seen her in the same circumstances on three occasions.

Government, who appeared to have come to ascertain what were the particular points with regard to which the relations between the English and French Governments might be improved. The same person has been to me again to-day, and has only just left me. This time he did not conceal that it was after being in communication with Flourens that he came. He enlarged on the embarrassing and indeed dangerous position in which France was placed by the adherence of Italy to the Austro-German Alliance, and said that M. Flourens was ready to make almost any sacrifice to secure

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the good will of England. I said that there could be no great difficulty in this, if only France would abstain from irritating opposition to us, and would settle promptly and satisfactorily outstanding questions. My visitor answered that Flourens conceived that he had sent conciliatory instructions to Waddington which would settle these questions, and that both Waddington and Florian[392] (who had come on leave) reported that there was decidedly a *détente*[393] in the strain which had existed in the Anglo-French relations. I said that I was delighted to hear it, and that it showed how ready you were to welcome all conciliatory overtures. My friend seemed on this occasion, as on the last, to wish me to tell him some special thing which Flourens might do to please you. I said that I should at any rate mention a thing which he might do to avoid displeasing you. He might prevent the French setting up an opposition to financial proposals in Egypt in cases in which all the other Powers were ready to agree. My friend spoke of Flourens's readiness to give to Russia on the Bulgarian question advice which you might suggest, and he mentioned various things which he thought M. Flourens might be ready to do to please England. These things appeared to me to be rather too grand and too vague in character to be very practical. I said, however, that I would always bear in mind what he had told me of M. Flourens's good dispositions, and would speak frankly and unreservedly to the Minister whenever I could make a suggestion as to the means of acting upon those dispositions in a manner to be satisfactory to England.

The conclusions I drew from the conversation of Flourens's friend were that the French are horribly afraid of our being led to join the Italo-Austro-German Alliance, and that they have been urged by Russia to exert themselves to prevent this. I do not conceive that the French expect to induce us to join them against the Germans and the German Alliance. What they want is to feel sure that we shall not join the others against France and Russia.

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It is somewhat curious that M. Flourens, who was evidently desirous of establishing better relations with England, should have selected an unofficial person for communication, rather than approach the Ambassador himself; but perhaps, being quite ignorant of diplomatic usage, he considered it necessary to shroud his action in mystery. The Triple Alliance dated in reality from 1882, Italy having joined the Austro-German Alliance in that year; but a new Treaty had been signed in the month of February, 1887, and caused the French to feel a well-justified alarm. In fact, their position was anything but a happy one, for it was generally

[392] Secretary of French Embassy at London. (LN) Count de Florian (often referred to in documents as M. de Florian). Between 1883 and 1893, the French Ambassador to the Court of St. James was William Henry Waddington. Count de Florian served as a high-ranking diplomat under Waddington, often acting as the First Secretary or Counsellor of the Embassy. (*Google Gemini*)

[393] The relaxation of strained relations or tensions

believed that the Emperor Alexander III[394] had resolved, since the abortive attempt on his life, that he would never ally himself with Revolutionists, and that he considered the French to be arch-Revolutionists. Perhaps this belief may have accounted in some measure for Flourens's amiable professions towards England.

In the month of April there occurred one of those incidents which are the despair of peaceably minded politicians and the delight of sensational journalism and of adventurers of the Boulanger type. A certain M. Schnaebelé[395], a French Commissaire de Police, was induced to cross the German frontier, and thereupon was arrested and imprisoned. The act had the appearance of provocation and naturally caused a prodigious uproar in France; Flourens endeavouring to settle the matter diplomatically and Boulanger seizing the opportunity to display patriotic truculence.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, April 26, 1887.

So far as one can judge at present the French are irritated beyond measure by the

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arrest at Pagny, but generally they still shrink from war. It will not, I conceive, be difficult for Bismarck to keep at peace with them, if he really wishes to do so. The danger is that they are persuaded that he is only looking out for a pretext, and that however much they may now give way, he will be bent upon humiliating them till they must resent and resist. I don't see that so far the German Government have treated the Pagny affair as if they wished to make a quarrel of it. The German *Chargé d'Affaires* has taken many messages from Berlin to Flourens in the sense that if Schnaebelé shall prove to have been arrested on German soil, all satisfaction shall be given. But, then, in the Press of the two countries a controversy is raging as to which side of the frontier he was arrested on, and as to whether or no he was inveigled over the frontier.

The French undoubtedly shrink from war, but they do not shrink from it as much as they did ten years ago; and if the press should get up a loud popular cry, there is no Government strength to resist it. I conceive that at this moment the Government is pacific, and that it does not believe the army to be yet ready. But if, as is no doubt the case, the Germans also believe that the French army is not as ready now as it will be two or three years hence, they may be impatient to begin. In the mean time, so far as I can make out, the Pagny affair is being treated by the two Governments with each other, in correct form diplomatically, and without any apparent willingness to embitter matters. I cannot say as much for the press on either side, though there are symptoms of prudence and caution in the moderate French papers.

[394] Alexander III (1845 – 1894) was Emperor of Russia, King of Congress Poland and Grand Duke of Finland from 13 March 1881 until his death in 1894. He was highly reactionary in domestic affairs and reversed some of the liberal reforms of his father, Alexander II, a policy of "counter-reforms". He was succeeded by his eldest son who was the last Czar as Nicholas II (1868 – 1918)

[395] Guillaume Schnaebelé or Wilhelm Schnäbele (1831 – 1900) was a French official from Alsace, best known for being arrested by Germans in the so-called Schnaebele incident of April 1887 which nearly led to war between France and Germany.

The Schnaebelé incident was disposed of by his release from prison and transfer to another post at Lyons; but the agitation did not subside readily, and a bill brought in by Boulanger to mobilize an army corps caused much disquietude at the German Embassy. It was now generally known that Bismarck considered

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Boulanger a danger and desired his removal from the War Office; but the very knowledge of this feeling and the support accorded to him by the League of Patriots and other noisy organizations rendered this step all the more difficult.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, May 13, 1887.

> I have not heard of any new incident between France and Germany, but the suspicion and susceptibility with which the two nations, and indeed the two Governments, regard each other, are certainly not diminishing.
>
> In France home politics are in so peculiar a state as to be positively disquieting. The Budget Committee and the Ministry have come to an open breach, and the Committee intend to propose to the Chamber a resolution which apparently must, if carried, turn out the Goblet Cabinet. This the Chamber would be willing enough to do, if it could see its way to forming another Government. The plan would be to form a Ministry with Freycinet as Prime Minister, but not as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and without Boulanger. But then they are afraid to try and upset Boulanger, while they feel that to form a new Government and put Boulanger in it would be, or might be, taken in Germany as a plain indication that they are warlike at heart. It is an emergency in which the Chief of the State should exert himself; but Grévy's caution has become something very like lethargy. In the mean time they are letting Boulanger grow up into a personage whose position may be a danger to the Republic at home, even if it does not embroil the country in a foreign war. The redeeming point in all this is that the Government does seem to feel that it would not do to be upon bad terms with England, and that it would be wise to be conciliatory toward us.

The Goblet Ministry soon found itself in hopeless difficulty over the Budget, and it was plain

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that another aimless change of men was inevitable. Goblet's Government had lasted for five months (inclusive of a prolonged recess), and the real question of interest was whether Boulanger was to be a member of the new Government or not. If he was included in it, it was apprehended that the suspicions of Germany would be aggravated; and on the other hand, it was doubtful whether any Government could be formed without him. An ultra-patriotic demonstration in Paris against German music, in the shape of Wagner's operas, was eloquent of the state of feeling between the two nations at the time, and the Government found that the only course open to them was to close the theatre where the obnoxious productions were to have appeared.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, May 20, 1887.

Freycinet appears to have agreed with Grévy to try and form a Cabinet and to be hard at work at the task. Of course the question is whether Boulanger is or is not to be in the new Cabinet? It was believed this morning that Grévy and Freycinet had decided upon offering to keep him as Minister of War. As the day has gone on, however, the belief has gained ground that Freycinet has not found colleagues willing to run the risk of war which the maintenance of Boulanger would produce, and that he is to propose to Grévy a Cabinet from which Boulanger is to be excluded. He is, however, to make it an essential condition with Grévy that he is to have the power to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies in his hands, as without this power he does not feel able to form a Cabinet without Boulanger, or indeed any Cabinet at all. In the mean time the Reds are getting up in all directions addresses and petitions in favour of Boulanger, with a view to forcing Grévy's and Freycinet's hands and working on their fears. If Boulanger is got rid of,

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the immediate danger of war will probably be escaped for the moment. Boulanger's own character, and the position in which he has placed himself, make him threatening to peace; and the opinion held of him in Germany and the irritation felt against him there make him still more dangerous.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, May 24, 1887.

The last news is supposed to be that Floquet, the President of the Chamber, has undertaken the task of forming a Ministry, and that he will keep many of the outgoing Ministers, Boulanger included. The goings and comings at the Elysée; the singular selections of men to be Prime Ministers, or quasi Prime Ministers, and the apparent want of firmness and inability to exercise any influence on the part of the President of the Republic, have certainly not increased the reputation of M. Grévy. Floquet will, I suppose, be unacceptable to Russia, for the Russians have always ostentatiously kept up the show of resentment against him for the cry, offensive to the Emperor Alexander II., which he raised when that monarch visited the Palais de Justice during the Exhibition of 1867. Boulanger has lately declared that he does not want to continue to be Minister, but that if he is Minister, he will, whatever Germany may say, continue his mobilization scheme, and not relax in his preparations to resist an attack from Germany, and to avert the necessity of submitting to humiliation.

I think, in fact, that things look very bad for France both at home and abroad. I can only hope that as the phases of the Ministerial crisis change from hour to hour, you may receive by telegraph some more satisfactory news before you get this letter.

In course of time a new Ministry was formed under M. Rouvier, and the important fact attaching to it was

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that Boulanger had been got rid of. Otherwise there was nothing much to distinguish the new Ministers from the old, and they seemed disposed to angle for popularity in the country much in the same way as Freycinet and Goblet.

The object of removing Boulanger had been to reassure and placate Germany, but no sooner had this been done, than the Government appeared to feel alarmed at the danger of incurring unpopularity in the country, and hastily announced that the new Minister of War would continue to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor.

Again, it had been understood that one of the objects of the new Government would be to put an end to the isolation of France by placing itself on more cordial terms with the neighbouring nations and especially with England; but what it appeared anxious to profess, was the intention of stoutly refusing to accept or even acquiesce in the Anglo-Turkish Convention respecting Egypt. All this, as Lord Lyons observed, might proceed in great measure from ignorance and inexperience, and might be mitigated by the knowledge of affairs and sense of responsibility which accompany office, but still it was disquieting: all the more disquieting, because the French Foreign Minister never failed to intimate that France would never be a party to an arrangement which would confer upon England an international right to re-occupy Egypt under certain circumstances after evacuation, whilst France was to be formally excluded from enjoying an equal right.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 12, 1887.

Baron Alphonse de Rothschild came to see me this afternoon, and told me that the last

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accounts he had received from Berlin caused him to feel more than usual alarm as to the feelings of Prince Bismarck and of the Germans in general towards France. They did not indeed imply that Germany was actually contemplating any immediate declaration of war, but they did show that in Germany war with France was regarded as a contingency that could not be long postponed, and of which the postponement was not desirable for German interests. The Germans did not seem to be prepared to incur the opprobrium of Europe by attacking France without having the appearance of a good reason for doing so, but they did seem to be looking out impatiently for a plausible pretext for a rupture; far from being sorry, they would be very glad if France would furnish them with such a pretext. Prince Bismarck was evidently not disposed to facilitate the task of M. Rouvier's Government, notwithstanding the pledges it had given of its desire for peace abroad, and the efforts it was making to promote moderation at home.

Baron de Rothschild had, he told me, seen M. Rouvier to-day and made all this known to him. He had pointed out to him the danger which arose from the sort of coalition against France of the Powers of Europe, had dwelt on the importance of making almost any sacrifice to break up this coalition, and had especially urged the imprudence of allowing coldness, if not ill-will, to subsist between France and England.

M. Rouvier had expressed an anxious desire to establish cordial relations with England.

Baron de Rothschild had answered that the time had come to show this by acts, and had strongly pressed M. Rouvier to settle without any delay the outstanding questions which produced irritation between the two countries. M. Rouvier had expressed his intention to do so, and Baron de Rothschild had reason to believe that this was also the desire and intention of M. Flourens.

I said that I heard this with great pleasure, and that I had received with much satisfaction assurances to the same effect respecting M. Flourens's sentiments, which had come to me indirectly through various channels. I must, however, confess that I

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had not found in M. Flourens himself any disposition to push assurance to this effect beyond generalities. I had not seen any strong practical instances of a desire on his part to give a speedy and satisfactory solution to outstanding questions.

Baron de Rothschild observed that what he had said on this point to M. Rouvier had appeared to make a considerable impression on him.

I said that it so happened that I should in all probability have the means of testing this almost immediately. I had in fact only yesterday strongly urged M. Flourens to close a question, that of the New Hebrides, which was creating suspicion and annoyance to England and causing great inconvenience in consequence of the very strong feeling about it which prevailed in the colonies. The two Governments were entirely in accord in principle upon it, and in fact it was only kept open by the pertinacity with which the French Government delayed to take the formal step necessary for closing it.

Baron de Rothschild went on to tell me that in speaking of the relations with England, M. Rouvier alluded to the convention negotiated by Sir Drummond Wolff at Constantinople, and said that he did not see why it should produce any lasting disagreement between France and England. Whether it was ratified or not, France might be as conciliatory as possible towards England in dealing with the matter in future. In answer I suppose to a remark from Baron de Rothschild, M. Rouvier would seem to have said that the Comte de Montebello[396] appeared to have gone far beyond his instructions in the language he had used to the Porte.

I asked Baron de Rothschild whether M. Rouvier had also said that the Comte de Montebello had received any check or discouragement from the Government at Paris.

Passing on from this, Baron de Rothschild told me that before concluding the conversation, he had pointed out to M. Rouvier that the great addition of strength which the Ministry had received from the vote of the Chamber yesterday, would enable them to act with more independence and vigour, and that they might now settle questions with England, and establish

[396] French Ambassador at Constantinople. (LN). (*See footnote on page 166*)

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> good relations with her without being under the constant fear of a check in the Chamber of Deputies.
>
> There can be no doubt that, in fact, the position of the Rouvier Ministry has been immensely strengthened by the large vote they obtained yesterday on the interpellation put forward against them on the subject of Monarchical and Clerical intrigues. It is earnestly to be hoped, for their own sakes, and for the sake of France, that they will turn it to account in order to pursue a more reasonable and conciliatory policy towards England, and to take stronger and more effectual means of preserving order in Paris. The riot at the Lyons railway station seems to have done Boulangism harm even among the ultra-Radicals, and to have been the main cause of Boulanger's having been thrown over by Radical speakers in the Chamber yesterday. But it is a very dangerous thing to give the Paris mob its head.

M. Rouvier's friendly assurances with regard to England had, of course, been imparted to the Baron in order that they might be communicated to the British Embassy, but the action of the French Government appeared to have very little in common with them; nor was there any reason to assume that Montebello was exceeding his instructions in opposing at Constantinople the ratification of the Anglo-Turkish Convention with regard to Egypt. The egregious action which forced the Sultan to withhold his consent to the Convention, and thereby perpetuated the British occupation of Egypt, was not the result of the unauthorized proceedings of the French Ambassador, but the consequence of the deliberately considered joint policy of the French and Russian Governments. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that the fruitless attempt to negotiate the Convention was yet another convincing proof of the absolute honesty of British policy with

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regard to Egypt, and the following letter from Lord Salisbury shows no satisfaction at the frustration of Sir H. Drummond Wolff's mission.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lyons.
July 20, 1887.

> I am afraid the temper of the French will not make the settlement of the Egyptian question more easy. I do not now see how we are to devise any middle terms that will satisfy them. We cannot leave the Khedive to take his chance of foreign attack, or native riot. The French refuse to let us exercise the necessary powers of defence unless we do it by continuing our military occupation. I see nothing for it but to sit still and drift awhile: a little further on in the history of Europe the conditions may be changed, and we may be able to get some agreement arrived at which will justify evacuation. Till then we must simply refuse to evacuate. Our relations with France are not pleasant at present. There are five or six different places where we are at odds:—
>
> 1. She has destroyed the Convention at Constantinople.
> 2. She will allow no Press Law to pass.
> 3. She is trying to back out of the arrangement on the Somali coast.
> 4. She still occupies the New Hebrides.
> 5. She destroys our fishing tackle, etc.

6. She is trying to elbow us out of at least two unpronounceable places on the West Coast of Africa.

Can you wonder that there is, to my eyes, a silver lining even to the great black cloud of a Franco-German War?

On account of the tension existing between France and Germany, and of the agitation produced by the transfer of Boulanger to a command at Clermont-Ferrand, it was feared that the National Fête of July 14

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would be marked by serious disturbances; these fears were happily not realized, although Boulanger's departure from Paris a few days earlier had formed the pretext for a display of embarrassing Jingoism. The French Government were so apprehensive of an anti-German demonstration, that, although Count Münster received the usual invitation to attend the Longchamps Review, M. Flourens privately begged him to absent himself, and the two German military attachés, instead of joining the War Minister's Staff in uniform, went to the Diplomatic Tribune in plain clothes.

Lord Lyons to Lord Salisbury.
Paris, July 15, 1887.

The National Fête of yesterday passed off quietly enough. There are said to have been cries in various places of "*Vive Boulanger*," and "*À bas Grévy,*"[397] but nowhere was there anything which assumed anything like the proportions of a demonstration. There do not appear to have been any cries at all in the army.

The low French papers keep up a constant fire of scurrilous language against the Germans and even against the Germany Embassy. This sort of thing seems to be taken more seriously and to cause more irritation in Germany than it would in most countries. Count Münster naturally enough did not come to the President's stand, to which he and the other Ambassadors were as usual invited to see the Review. The German military attachés did not go in uniform with the staff of the Minister of War, but saw the Review from the Diplomatic Tribune in plain clothes. In fact, ill will between France and Germany seems to be on the increase. It looks as if the Germans would really be glad to find a fair pretext for going to war with France. On the other hand, Boulangism, which is now the French term for Jingoism, spreads, especially amongst the reckless Radicals and enemies of the present Ministry. And even among

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the better classes, warlike language and, to some degree, a warlike spirit grows up with a new generation, which has had no practical acquaintance with war. Abject fear of the German armies is being succeeded by overweening confidence in themselves.

The present Ministry seem to have been afraid of unpopularity if they abandoned altogether Boulanger's absurd mobilization scheme. The Germans seem to be taking this quietly. Perhaps they look on with satisfaction at the French incurring an immense expenditure for an experiment apparently without any practical use from a

[397] Long live, Boulanger, down with Grévy.

> military point of view. Perhaps they believe, as many people do here, that the Chambers will never really vote the money.
>
> It is supposed that the session will be over next week, and I trust that then you will be disposed to receive an application from me for leave. I am getting quite knocked up by the Paris summer, and am in urgent need of rest and country air.

The foregoing letter was one of the last communications received from Lord Lyons at Paris, and his official career practically terminated a few days later, when he left on leave, destined never to return to the post which he had so long occupied, for the unfavourable view which he held with regard to his physical condition was only too completely justified.

He appears to have passed the months of August and September quietly with his near relatives in Sussex. Towards the end of October he must have learnt with some surprise that, whereas in March he had been most urgently begged by Lord Salisbury to remain at his post until the end of the year, a successor to him, in the person of Lord Lytton, had been appointed, and that there was no necessity for him to return to Paris. If

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he, as would have been the case with most people, really felt aggrieved at this change of circumstances, there is no trace of resentment shown in his correspondence. On the contrary, he warmly welcomed the new appointment, and at once set about making arrangements for his successor's convenience. On November 1, he made a formal application to be permitted to resign his appointment, was created an Earl, and the few remaining letters (the latest bearing the date of November 20) deal with business details, and unostentatious acts of kindness to various persons who had been in his service or otherwise connected with him. The very last of all was a characteristic communication to Sir Edwin Egerton,[398] the *Chargé d'Affaires* at Paris, respecting the payment of the fire insurance premium on the Embassy.

The close of his life was destined to coincide dramatically with the close of his official career. Intellectually there were no signs of decay; but physically he was even more worn out than he realized himself. On November 28, whilst staying at Norfolk House, he was stricken with paralysis, and a week later he was dead, without having in the meanwhile recovered consciousness. Thus the end came at a moment singularly appropriate to his well ordered existence, and to no one could the time-honoured Latin epitaph have been applied with greater accuracy.

In an earlier portion of this work some attempt has been made to portray Lord Lyons's personality and to explain the causes of his success as a diplomatist, but the best criterion of the man is to be found in his letters, which have been reproduced verbatim, and may be said to constitute a condensed record of the most

[398] Sir Edwin Henry Egerton (1841 – 1916) was a British diplomat who was envoy to Greece and ambassador to Spain and Italy. He joined the Diplomatic Service in 1859 as an attaché at St Petersburg. He was Secretary of Legation at Buenos Aires 1879–1881 and at Athens 1881–85; Consul-General in Egypt 1884–85; Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople in 1885 and at Paris during 1885–86; Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Greece 1892–1903; Ambassador to Spain 1903–04 and Ambassador to Italy 1905–08. During his time in Paris, Egerton was trained by Lord Lyons,

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interesting episodes in English diplomatic history during a space of nearly thirty years. Throughout this long series there is hardly to be found an unnecessary sentence or even a redundant epithet; there is a total absence of any straining after effect, of exaggeration, of personal animosity or predilection, or of any desire to gain his ends by intrigue or trickery. On the other hand, they are marked by profound mastery of detail, sound judgment, inexhaustible patience, an almost inhuman impartiality, and an obviously single-minded desire to do his best for his country as one of its most responsible representatives. Such, then, was the character of the man, and the general public is probably quite unconscious of the inestimable value to the country of officials of this particular type.

It was Lord Lyons's fate twice to represent this country at most critical periods during wars, in the course of which, England, while desiring to observe the strictest neutrality, aroused the bitterest hostility on the part of the belligerents. In spite of untiring efforts he had the mortification of seeing the relations of England, first with the United States and then with France, gradually deteriorate, and never experienced the satisfaction, which no one would have appreciated more highly than himself, of seeing those unfriendly relations converted into the condition which now happily prevails; but it may be fairly said of him that no one ever laboured more assiduously and efficiently to promote peace and good will between England and her neighbours; that he never made either an enemy or apparently a mistake, and that no other diplomatist of his day enjoyed to an equal degree the confidence of his chiefs, and the regard of his subordinates.

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Overshadowed by more brilliant and interesting personalities, the unobtrusive services of Lord Lyons are unknown to the rising generation, and probably forgotten by many of those who have reached middle age; but in the opinion of the statesman who amongst living Englishmen is the most competent to judge, he was the greatest Ambassador who has represented this country in modern times, and by those whose privilege it was to serve under him, his memory will ever be held in affectionate remembrance.

APPENDIX

LORD LYONS IN PRIVATE LIFE.
BY MRS. WILFRID WARD.[399]

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It is not uncommon to find a seeming contradiction between the official and the private characters of the same individual. Extreme reserve, for instance, even an astonishing power of silence in conducting official work, may not indicate the same power of silence in private life, or the same reserve in the life of the affections. In Lord Lyons there was no such contrast, and no attempt to depict him could pretend to penetrate his extreme reserve as to his deeper feelings. This reticence on his part must severely limit any account of his *vie intime*. Moreover, curiously enough there is another difficulty in describing him which lies in quite an opposite direction. Lord Lyons had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and he loved the absolute relaxation of talking pure nonsense which, however amusing at the moment, would hardly bear the strain of repetition. Indeed, very little can be added to the history of the public life of a man so absolutely reticent as to his feelings, his thoughts, and his opinions, which he further concealed rather than revealed by an almost burlesque habit of talking nonsense among his intimates.

It would be easy to give many instances of his gift for silence when he did not wish to be "drawn" by his interlocutor. A little story told to me by the late Sir Edward Blount[400] is a case in point.

Sir Edward, waiting to see Lord Lyons at the Embassy, heard talking in the next room which lasted some

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time, and soon distinguished the voice of M. Blowitz. As soon as he was alone with Lord Lyons he said that he felt obliged to warn him that, if he had liked, he could have overheard his conversation with the journalist.

"You might," was the answer, "have overheard what was said by M. Blowitz, but you could not have heard anything said by me for the good reason that I said nothing at all!"

It was never known to anybody, as far as it is possible to ascertain, whether Lord Lyons had ever even contemplated marriage, though he certainly did not recommend celibacy. "Matrimony," he constantly used to repeat—slightly varying the phrase in his favourite *Rasselas*—"may have thorns, but celibacy has no roses."[401]

There was at one moment, while he was attached to the Embassy at Rome, a rumour that he was engaged to be married. Hearing something of it he inquired of a lady friend whether she

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[399] Josephine Mary Ward (née Hope or Hope-Scott; published as Mrs Wilfrid Ward, 1864 – 1932) was a British novelist and nonfiction writer whose works were informed by her Roman Catholic faith. She published ten novels

[400] Sir Edward Charles Blount (1809 – 1905) was an English banker in Paris and promoter of French railways.

[401] *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*, is a philosophical short story by the scholar and lexicographer, Samuel Johnson. It was first published in 1759.

could tell him to whom he was supposed to be attached, and later on he discovered that she was herself the person in question!

His nature was certainly lonely, and I believe from quite early in life he was conscious of suffering from loneliness. I have been told of a letter of his written from school in which this was quite clearly set forth. In later life he would never have expressed so much. What he felt and thought on any intimate question can, I think, only be inferred by his comments on life in general, or on the sorrows and joys of others. Once only I believe did he take any part in directly influencing the lives of young people in the critical question of marriage. The daughter of an old friend, with a courage in her confidence which seems to me almost phenomenal, told him the story of a mutual affection existing between her and a young man who did not seem to her parents to be a sufficiently good match. Lord Lyons listened with the utmost attention, and eventually interceded with his old friend, speaking of the terrible danger of causing irremediable pain to two young hearts, and was the means of making these young people happy. Was there, perhaps, in this action

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some reminiscence of a possible past happiness lost by himself? No one can even make the faintest surmise as to whether this was the case. He made no allusion to his own past when telling the story.

Of his childhood I know little, but there is a toy preserved in the family that gives a curious and characteristic foretaste of what he was to become. It is a miniature escritoire fitted with pen and paper and seals, and also soap and towels, *etc.* All this was supposed to belong to the children's dog, who was promoted in their games to the position of an Ambassador, and described as "His Excellency." There are still existing despatches written to and by "His Excellency" in the handwriting of the four children.

I think he must have been too old to have joined in his sister Minna's bit of naughtiness when at Malta she put snuff in the guitar of a young exquisite who had provoked their mirth, and whose name was Benjamin Disraeli.

He used to say that among his most vivid recollections of his boyhood while at Malta, was the unexpected return of his father and the fleet. The children had been deeply engaged in preparing theatricals which were postponed on account of their father's arrival. He remembered his guilty feeling that he ought to be glad, and that he was not glad at all!

It was not at first intended that Bickerton Lyons should enter the diplomatic service; he began life in the navy. But Bickerton, unlike his brother Edmund, had no vocation for the sea. The sorrow of Edmund's loss, who died at Therapia, from a wound received when commanding his ship in the Sea of Azoph[402] during the Crimean war, was a shadow that never passed from the lives of the other three. Bickerton was deeply attached to both his sisters and their families. Annie[403] married Baron Wurtzburg, and Minna[404] married Lord Fitzalan, afterwards

[402] Now called the Sea of Azov, which lies NE of the Crimean peninsula and is connected at its southern end to the Black Sea.
[403] Hon. Anne Theresa Bickerton Lyons, Baroness von Würtzburg (1815 – 1894) was the daughter of Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons, of Christchurch, Hampshire and his wife, Augusta Louisa Rogers (1791-1852), daughter of Captain Josiah Rogers, RN. In 1839, she married a Bavarian nobleman, Philipp Hartmann Veit Baron von Würtzburg (1811 – 1897), son of Joseph Franz Lothar Konstantin Baron von Würtzburg (1784 – 1865)

Duke of Norfolk. Other relations with whom he was in close intimacy all his life were his aunt, Mrs. Pearson[405] and her children, especially her daughters, Mrs. Lister Venables and Mrs. Little, who both survived him.

All his life Lord Lyons was devoted to children, and especially so to the large family of the Duchess of

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Norfolk, with whom he was able to indulge his domestic tastes and his love of fun. He spent with them the greater part of every holiday, and in the last twenty-five years of his life they were frequently with him in Paris. My mother, Lady Victoria,[406] the eldest of the family, married very young, and my aunt Minna, the second daughter, became a Carmelite nun. Mary, the eldest of the sisters who remained at home, was Lord Lyons's constant companion and secretary. I think she was the only person who did not experience the strong sense of his reserve which so impressed those who had to do with him even in everyday intercourse. In a very serious state of health which followed his work at Washington he depended greatly on the companionship of his nieces. I have been told that for months he could not raise his head, and the only thing he could do by himself was to play with glass balls on a solitaire board. During this interval in his career, before he accepted the Embassy at Constantinople, he had more leisure than usual for the society of his sister's family, but he had always been devoted to them when they were quite little children, and was once described as 'an excellent nursery governess.' He said to his sister: 'I could never have married; it would not have been right, as I could never have loved my own children as much as I love yours.'

Into this near association with him my sisters and I were more closely drawn after the death of our parents. We had lost our mother in the winter of 1870, and my father, James Hope-Scott, died in the spring of 1873. It was then that my grandmother took us to live with her at Arundel, and we were added to the large family party who had often stayed with him in Paris. My own earliest recollections of my great-uncle are tinged with an awe which no amount of time spent with him ever quite overcame; but it did not prevent great enjoyment of all the fun we had with him. He was certainly very indulgent to the younger members of the family circle, particularly my brother, who was some years younger than the rest of us, and this was especially the case when we were his guests.

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I think that what inspired awe was the immense strength of character, the reserved force, the severely controlled natural irritability. He had, too, a humorous vehemence of expression which seemed at times to be a safety valve to the forces he had under control, and was a reminder of their existence.

I suppose that nothing could be imagined more stately and more regular than life at the Embassy in those days. The Ambassador himself lived in a routine of absolute regularity and

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[404] Augusta Fitzalan-Howard, Duchess of Norfolk (née The Hon. Augusta Mary Minna Catherine Lyons, 1821 – 1886) was commonly known by her middle name, "Minna". She was the younger daughter of Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons by his wife Augusta Louisa (née Rogers).
[405] Caroline Lyons (1800 – 1879) was married in 1820 to Henry Shepherd Pearson, Governor of Penang. They had eight children including Augusta Pearson (c. 1828–1922), who married barrister and solicitor George Arthur Knightley Howman (later Little) and Agnes Minna Pearson (1835 – 1908), who married the Rev. Richard Lister Venables in 1867.
[406] Lady Victoria Alexandrina Fitzalan-Howard (1840 – 1870) married James Robert Hope-Scott.

extremely hard work. He got up at seven, had breakfast at eight, and was, I think, at work by nine o'clock. His very small leisure, when he was alone, was mostly spent in reading. And this was carefully classified in three divisions. In the morning he read history or science, in the evening, between tea and dinner, biography; while, for an hour before he went to bed he read novels. While in France he never left the Embassy. Once a year he did leave it for his annual holiday—generally spent in England. He used to boast how many nights in succession—I think in one year it amounted to over 300—he had slept in the same bed. Every afternoon when we were with him, he drove with my grandmother, generally in the Bois de Boulogne, and in the warm weather we always stopped at some café for us children to have ices. He also took us to the circus once during each visit until, in later life, he became afraid of catching cold. He still occasionally went to the theatre, to which he had been much devoted as a younger man. We all dined downstairs, and he used to like my youngest sister and my brother to sit at a little table near the big one and have dessert. He insisted on this, and was rather pleased than otherwise at the scolding he received from an English friend for keeping them up so late. In later life he used to speak of the pretty picture the two children had made.

I recollect the extraordinary general sense of importance as to his movements in those days, partly on account of their phenomenal regularity. I could not imagine him ever acting on impulse, even in the matter of going up or downstairs. I cannot picture him strolling into his own garden except at the fixed hour. This without intention added to the dignity of his life which seemed to move like a rather dreary state procession.

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I wonder if the servants who never saw him break through his routine, or lose one jot of his dignity, ever guessed at how shy he was of them, or suspected the rather wistful curiosity he felt about their lives. I think it was Pierre, the butler, who lived with his family in the entresol between the two floors of reception rooms in the Embassy. Lord Lyons was much interested in their family life, and liked to speculate as to what went on there. One inconvenient result of his extreme shyness was that when he really wished to alter any detail as to the daily routine, he could not bring himself to impart his wishes to any of the servants. I have often heard him say how tired he was of the same breakfast which never varied in the least, and he would add that his Italian valet Giuseppe was so convinced that it was the only breakfast he liked that when he travelled, the man took incredible pains that the coffee, the eggs, the rolls, the marmalade, the two tangerine oranges in winter and the tiny basket of strawberries in summer, should not differ an iota from those served up every morning at the Embassy. But Lord Lyons could never summon up courage to speak to him on the subject. On certain days Pierre undertook Giuseppe's duties, and for many years Lord Lyons wished that Pierre would arrange his things as they were arranged by Giuseppe, but he never told him so. While he grumbled, he was amused at the situation and at himself. Indeed, his keen sense of the ridiculous and his endless enjoyment of nonsense explain a good deal of his life. He used to say that as he was too shy to look at the servants' faces, he had learnt to know them by their silk stockinged calves. When he dined alone he made an amusement of identifying the six or seven pairs of calves, and was proud of his success in this odd game of skill.

I recall one ludicrous instance of his shyness with servants. It was his custom annually when he came to stay with us to shake hands with the old family nurse, and on one occasion,

meeting her on the stairs, he leant across the banisters to perform the ceremony with such *empressement*[407] and effort that he broke one of

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the supports. He always afterwards alluded to the extraordinary emotion he had shown in this greeting. Nothing is so unaccountable as shyness, but it was curious that a man who had seen so much of public life and of society should have so much of it as he had. I remember once helping him to escape with, for him, astonishing speed across the garden of a country house, when a very agreeable woman, whom I believe he really liked, had come to call; he was as full of glee as if he were a boy running away from a school-master.

I don't think that in Paris he ever gave way to such impulses; they were the relaxation of a shy nature in the holidays.

To return for one moment to Paris. He occasionally gave a big official dinner which I don't think he at all enjoyed, and of which we knew nothing. But he certainly enjoyed small gatherings, especially if they included old friends who were passing through Paris, although not one word of ordinary sentiment would probably pass his lips, nor would one of the day's arrangements be changed. He certainly enjoyed the society of his women friends, and I liked to watch him talking to Mrs. Augustus Craven,[408] the author of the *Récit d'une Sœur*. Two characteristic sayings of his about the Cravens I remember. He was always pleased at showing his knowledge of the most orthodox and strict views of Roman affairs. He used to say that Mrs. Craven could never make amends for her conduct at the time of the Vatican Council—when her salon was a centre for "inopportunist" Bishops—unless she went back to Rome and gave "Infallibilist tea-parties."

Mr. Augustus Craven, her husband, was intensely mysterious in manner, and Lord Lyons used to call him "the General of the Jesuits." Once, on meeting him in London, he asked him if his wife were with him. Mrs. Craven was staying with Lady Cowper, and Mr. Craven answered with solemn, slow and mysterious tones: "She is at Wrest," and my uncle said "*Requiescat in Pace*,"[409] with equal solemnity.

I think that with all his natural British prejudices he liked French people and their ways. He used to

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maintain that Frenchwomen were more domestic and kept earlier hours than Englishwomen. He certainly liked French cooking. He spoke once in tones of horror of an Englishman who had committed the monstrosity of putting pepper on young green peas—a crime of which a Frenchman was incapable.

Many of his opinions, however, like Dr. Johnson's, were evoked by the spirit of contradiction, and it was chiefly with English people that I heard him talk about the French.

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[407] Eagerness.
[408] Pauline Marie Armande Aglaé Craven (née Ferron de La Ferronnays; 1808 – 1891) was a French writer. She married Augustus Craven, who was then attached to the British embassy. His father, Richard Keppel Craven, was the well-known supporter of Queen Caroline. Her book book, *Le Récit d'une Sœur* (1866, English translation 1868), was enthusiastically received and was awarded a prize by the French Academy.
[409] Rest in peace.

In the holidays in England reading aloud was one of his chief pleasures. He read much poetry to us at one time, but later I think he had to give this up as it tired him. At Arundel he wrote his letters in the dressing-room opening out of his bedroom. We used to sit there waiting for him before the appointed time, making drawings in red ink, of which there was always a large supply, when he would make a mock solemn entrance, as of a stiff professor. We were allowed to scribble during the reading, but, woe betide us! if we showed any inattention. He read *Marmion*, Southey's *Thalaba*, and, I think, 'The *Curse of Kehama*, also much of Byron, the *Siege of Corinth*, with especial enjoyment. He knew many pages of Byron by heart, and we used to get him to repeat any amount while out walking. *Rejected Addresses*, *Bombastes Furioso*, *The Rape of the Lock* were also among the many things he liked to recite. I wish I could remember half the things he read or repeated to us. I am sure there was no Tennyson, and certainly no Browning. He used to jeer at the obscurity of both the Brownings, and to mutter such phrases as the "thundering white silence" of Mrs. Browning with intense scorn. I think he may have met the Brownings when he was in Rome. He saw a good deal of Fanny and Adelaide Kemble[410] at that time. He liked Adelaide much the best of the two, and used to quote with delight a saying of hers as to the Brownings. When she was told of the birth of their son she exclaimed: "There are now then not one incomprehensible, or two incomprehensibles, but three incomprehensibles!"

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He was always amused at the Kemble grand manner. He used to imitate the dramatic utterance with which Fanny Kemble frightened a young waiter who had brought her some beer. "I asked for water, boy; you bring me beer!"

At that same time he knew Sir Frederick Leighton,[411] and they once had a pillow fight! Who could imagine that pillow fight who only knew him as Ambassador in Paris? He always spoke as if he had enjoyed life in Rome; he was devoted to the theatre, and he had much congenial society. He used to say, too, that Pius IX[412] was the most agreeable sovereign with whom he ever had diplomatic relations.

Lord Lyons's literary tastes were not those of the present generation. He declared that he only liked verse that rhymed and music with a tune. He loved the sonorous sound of Byron as he loved the solemn cadence of Latin verse. All the time the love of absurdity was never far off. He would suddenly imitate the action of a schoolboy repeating Latin verse, first with his arms and then with his feet! A stout, very dignified elderly man, in some path in the garden, punctuating the verse with the action of his feet, is sufficiently surprising.

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[410] Adelaide Kemble (1815 – 1879) was an English opera singer of the Victorian era, and a member of the Kemble family of actors. She was the younger sister of Fanny Kemble (1809 – 1903), the actress and anti-slavery activist. Their father was actor Charles Kemble, their mother Maria Theresa Kemble.
[411] Frederic Leighton, 1st Baron Leighton, (1830 – 1896), known as Sir Frederic Leighton between 1878 and 1896, was a British Victorian painter, draughtsman, and sculptor. His works depicted historical, biblical, and classical subject matter in an academic style. Leighton was the bearer of the shortest-lived peerage in history; after only one day, his hereditary peerage became extinct upon his death.
[412] Pope Pius IX (1792 – 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 and second only to Saint Peter according to Catholic tradition. He was notable for convoking the First Vatican Council in 1868 which defined the dogma of papal infallibility. When France started the Franco-Prussian War it removed the troops that protected the Papal States, which allowed the Capture of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy on 20 September 1870.

Occasionally he would have the oddest freaks of this kind, and I remember an afternoon when he took a whim of pretending to be imbecile; he made the most extraordinary faces, and not a word of sense could be got from him.

Once in a steamer on the lake of Lucerne he insisted on his nieces joining him in impersonating a typical family of English tourists out for their holiday. He was the paterfamilias, one niece was his wife, another the German governess, a third his child. In the middle of the performance he found that he was being regarded with surprise and curiosity by some English society friends whose acquaintance with him had hitherto been exclusively in the character of a very dignified ambassador.

My aunt, Mary Howard,[413] used to read aloud to him by the hour, and we all enjoyed these times immensely. It

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would be difficult to say how often we had *Pickwick*, *Cranford*, *Rasselas*, *The Rose and the Ring*, and *Mrs. Boss's Niece*. I have never met anybody outside that circle who ever even heard of *Mrs. Boss's Niece*; it is a serious loss. To quote at all appropriately from any of his favourites was to be exceedingly in his good books for the rest of the day. Like the late Lord Salisbury he delighted in Miss Yonge;[414] he could not have too many pairs of twins, or too large a family circle to read about. He loved the analysis of domestic life, and would have been ready to canonize any really and genuinely unselfish character. Detective stories were a great joy. *The House on the Marsh*, and *Called Back*, were among the most successful. He used to prolong discussion as to the solution of the mystery, and would even knock at our doors very late at night if he thought he had identified the murderer, and mutter in dramatic undertones, "So-an-so was the man who did it." But the detective story was never read before dinner, and to look into the book meanwhile was a crime. Anybody who peeped to see the end of a novel "deserved to be dragged to death by wild horses." And there must be no skipping. Only descriptions of scenery—to which he had the strongest objection—might be left out.

The annual holiday was, for the most part, spent with the Duchess of Norfolk at Arundel, and later at Heron's Ghyll. Sometimes he went to Germany to take the waters, in company with his eldest sister, Baroness Wurtzburg. When in England he always paid a certain number of country house visits. These generally included Knowsley and Woburn. The visits that were paid every year, I think without exception, were those to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe,[415] and to an old schoolfellow—Major Trower, who had been with him at Winchester. Major Trower[416] was one of four old Wykehamists who remained close friends. The other two had

[413] Lady Mary Adeliza Fitzalan-Howard (1845 – 1925) was the third child and third daughter of Henry Granville Fitzalan-Howard, 14th Duke of Norfolk (1815 – 1860).
[414] Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823 – 1901) was an English novelist, who wrote in the service of the church. Her abundant books helped to spread the influence of the Oxford Movement and showed her keen interest in matters of public health and sanitation.
[415] Stratford Canning, 1st Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe (1786 – 1880), was a British diplomat who became best known as the longtime British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. A 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.
[416] There was a Major Charles Thomas Trower (1815 – 1901) connected with 93rd Highlanders or the 103rd Regiment of Foot but few details are available. His birth year would make him contemporary

died some time before. I think the visit to Raby[417] was annual. He specially enjoyed the society of the Duchess of Cleveland[418] and of Lady Mary Hope. He was at Raby in the September before he died, and I believe that was the last visit he ever paid. The famous visitors' book there always amused him, and he was

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fond of quoting from it. One of his own contributions I remember was written with mock modesty. He took from Lockhart's Spanish ballads the lines:—

> ''Twere better to be silent before such a crowd of folk,
> Than utter words as meaningless as he did when he spoke."

His recollections of the society of his youth in these houses had some amusing details. I think it was at the Duchess of Bedford's that there was a Christmas tree, off which each young man visitor was given a piece of flowered silk for a waistcoat. Early next morning, at Mr. Lyons's suggestion, one of the young men, provided with a list of the names and addresses of the tailors employed by the others, went up to London and brought back all the waistcoats made up in time to be worn at dinner that evening. He used to speak with some amusement of the ungraciousness of Rogers,[419] the poet, whom he met at the Derbys'. On one occasion Rogers had lost his spectacles, and Mr. Lyons went a long way in the big house to find them. Rogers who was drinking tea took the spectacles, but did not thank him, and, a moment later, when he heard Mr. Lyons refusing sugar, he observed to the company: "That young man, having nothing else to be proud of, is proud of not having sugar with his tea!"

I don't suppose that he talked much as a young man, and probably he followed the rule he always preached, that young men should speak "little but often."

Among the few serious sayings to be quoted from him was that the great axiom in diplomacy was "Never do anything to-day that can be put off till to-morrow."

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with Lord Lyons. He was a relative of Charles Francis Trower (1817 – 1891) who was an English first-class cricketer and barrister whose birth year fits for being an exact contemporary of Lord Lyons at Winchester. He went to Exeter College, Oxford but was not an army officer. (*Google Gemini*)

[417] Raby Castle, one of the most impressive and historically significant medieval fortresses in Northern England. Located near Staindrop in County Durham, it served as the seat of the Vane family, who were the Dukes of Cleveland. Contemporary with Lord Lyons, was Harry George Powlett, 4th Duke of Cleveland (1803 – 1891), styled The Honourable Harry Vane until 1827 and Lord Harry Vane from 1827 to 1864. In 1864 he adopted by Royal Licence the surname and arms of Powlett in lieu of Vane. He was an English landowner, diplomat and Whig statesman.

[418] Catherine Lucy Wilhelmina Powlett, Duchess of Cleveland (née Stanhope; 1819 – 1901), also known as Lady Dalmeny and Lady Harry Vane, was an English courtier, historian and genealogist, best known for her 1889 work *The Battle Abbey Roll with some Account of the Norman Lineages*. By her first marriage to Lord Dalmeny, she was the mother of Prime Minister Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery. Her second daughter was Lady Mary Catherine Constance Primrose (1845 – 1935) who married Henry Walter Hope. Her second marriage was to Lord Harry Vane (1803 – 1891), youngest son of William Vane, 1st Duke of Cleveland (1766-1842); he succeeded his brother in the dukedom in 1864, and changed his surname to Powlett.

[419] Samuel Rogers (1763 – 1855) was an English poet. He made his money as a banker and was also an art collector.

In speaking of Leo XIII and his successful policy with Bismarck, he said: "Those very clever men succeed by doing what no one expects. My success has been made by always doing what was expected of me. I always did the safe thing."

In conversation he enjoyed a Johnsonian style of repartee. One retort of his had an excellent practical result. He acted as a special constable in London during the Chartist Riots. Hearing a woman in the dense crowd

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cry out, "Let me faint, let me faint," he turned to her at once, and said: "Pray do, madam," whereupon she recovered immediately.

Soon after the Berlin Conference when the Disraeli party were making the most of the accession of Crete, a visitor at the Embassy, gushing over its charms concluded with the assertion that Crete was the loveliest island in the world. Whereupon Mr. William Barrington[420] (now Sir William Barrington) said drily: "Have you seen all the others?" This amused Lord Lyons immensely, and some years afterwards when a young lady who was and is still famous for her powers of conversation had talked at him for some time, he adopted the same method. After a good many other sweeping assertions she said of some work that had just come out: "It is the best written book that has appeared this century." "Ah," he said, "have you read all the others?" Being alone with her soon afterwards I was not surprised at her inquiring of me dubiously whether I liked my great-uncle.

It need hardly be said that, in the matter of his personal religion, Lord Lyons was very reticent. He was absolutely regular in his attendance at the Sunday service in Paris and in England. He was very fond of the singing of English hymns.

He never had any sympathy with the ritualist party in the Church of England, and was inclined to be sarcastic as to those whom he designated "Puseyites,"[421] as was then the custom.

One who knew him very well told me that for a time he was somewhat unsettled in the matter of definite religious belief. There is also evidence that in middle life the idea of joining the Catholic Church had been present to him as a possibility. As far as can be known it was during the last summer of his life that he began to consider the question practically. It is not surprising that Lord Lyons, when he took the matter up, showed the same characteristics in its regard that he had shown in any serious question throughout his life, namely, the greatest thoroughness and care in studying the Catholic religion and in carrying out its practical side,

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reserve as to deep sentiment, not without humorous touches which were intensely characteristic. Newman's works formed the chief part of his study during those summer

[420] Sir William Augustus Curzon Barrington (1842 – 1922) was a British diplomat who had postings variously in Buenos Aires in 1883, Budapest in 1885, Madrid in 1888, Vienna in 1892. In 1896, he became Envoy Extraordinary Minister Plenipotentiary to the Argentine Republic and simultaneously to the Republic of Paraguay. In March 1902 he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the King of Sweden and Norway and served until 1904.

[421] So called after Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800 – 1882) who was an English Anglican cleric, for more than fifty years Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford. He was one of the leading figures in the High Church Oxford Movement, founded by Newman.

months. A letter written in that August says of him, "He is always reading Newman[422]." It was not until shortly before his death that he spoke on the matter to any of the family. A note in the writing of his secretary and intimate friend—Mr. George Sheffield—says that he spoke of it six weeks before his death. Lord Lyons had known Bishop Butt[423] for many years when he was parish priest at Arundel, and it was to him that he applied for advice. He studied the Penny Catechism most carefully, learning the answers by heart, like a child. He began to fulfil the practices of a Catholic with great regularity. He went to Mass daily at ten o'clock, and adopted little habits of self-denial and showed greater liberality in almsgiving. The last honour he ever received was the offer of an earldom on his retiring from the Paris Embassy. He suggested to Dr. Butt that it would be a good act of mortification to refuse this honour, but the Bishop would not advise him to do so. He began, against his usual custom, to give money to crossing-sweepers or beggars in the streets, and I am told by my aunt, Lady Phillippa Stewart,[424] that, after returning from my wedding, he said to her: "Is it not customary after an event of this kind to give money in alms?" He then suggested that he should make some offering to the hospitals and asked her to write out the names of those she thought would be the most suitable. It was about ten days before my marriage in November, 1887, that I first heard of his intentions. I learnt it in a fashion very characteristic of him. I was not staying in the house, but I had been dining with him when he remarked casually: "Really, my austerities are becoming alarming. I have given up soup for dinner and jam for breakfast." This struck me as a novel proceeding, as I knew his fondness for jam and that the ordinary routine of dinner beginning with a clear soup was a fixed ceremonial with him. That night I questioned my aunt, who told me that he had been for

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some weeks preparing to join the Church. It was at this time that he said to one of the family: "I am now ready to be received as soon as the Bishop likes." He also characteristically consulted his nephew, the Duke of Norfolk, as to whether he ought to inform Lord Salisbury of his intention of becoming a Catholic. He did not, during these weeks, know that he was in any danger. The last time I saw my great uncle was at my wedding. He had a stroke about ten days afterwards, and to all appearance became unconscious. Dr. Butt, knowing what his intentions had been, had no hesitation in giving him conditional Baptism and Extreme Unction. I was at the funeral at Arundel, and saw the coffin lowered into the vault in the Fitzalan Chapel, where his sister Minna had been placed two and a half years earlier.

I feel most strongly as I conclude these very imperfect notes, how entirely Lord Lyons belonged to a generation of Englishmen now long passed away. The force of will, the power of self-devotion, the dignity, the reticence, the minute regularity, the sense of order, the degree of submission to authority and the undoubting assertion of his own authority towards others—all were elements in a strong personality. There are, no doubt, strong men now, but their strength is of a different kind. Englishmen to-day are obliged to be more expansive and unreserved. No fixed routine can be followed now as then; no man can so guard his own life and his own personality from the public eye. Lord Lyons was not of the type that makes the successful servant of the democracy. Fidelity, reticence, self-effacement, are not the

[422] John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890) was an English Catholic theologian, academic, philosopher, historian, writer, and poet. He was previously an Anglican priest, and after his conversion to Catholicism became a cardinal.
[423] John Baptist Butt (1826 – 1899) was an English prelate who served as the fourth Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark from 1885 to 1897.
[424] Lady Philippa Fitzalan-Howard (1852 – 1946) was the sixth child of Henry Granville Fitzalan-Howard, 14th Duke of Norfolk and married Sir Edward Stewart.

characteristics that are prominent in the popular idea of the strong man to-day. But no one who knew Lord Lyons can doubt that those qualities were in him a great part of his strength. He was and must always be to those who knew him very much of an enigma, and it certainly would not have been his own wish that any great effort should be made to interpret his inner life to the world at large.

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