

Empress of Russia in regard to the encroachment upon Poland is to be purchased by a full permission to maintain the influence or dominion over the rest of that country, which she now possesses.

In regard to the affairs of France, I am inclined to believe that the zeal which has been shown for the re-establishment of monarchy is much abated, and that any material change in the government of that country is now looked upon either as a subordinate or unattainable object; and that therefore proposals for peace upon your Lordship's ideas might not be unlikely to meet with the approbation of the two Courts, if the Project now in agitation were to be laid aside. The Empress of Russia seems to adhere more rigidly to the principle of re-establishing the ancient Government or something resembling it. But in regard to that sovereign I ought to observe that, from language which has been lately held relative to dangers upon the side of Sweden and Turkey, she seems to be preparing grounds for a refusal to take an active part, with her troops at least, in the next campaign.

[He then adds that in the next campaign 70,000 Austrians would enter the Low Countries under the Prince of Coburg, who would soon arrive at Frankfort. These troops and also some of Clerfayt's were already on the march towards Cologne; 20,000 Prussians would assemble at Wesel under the Duke of Brunswick, who left Frankfort for Wesel two days ago; 4,000 Hanoverians would join them. 17,000 Austrians were marching upon Mannheim.]

*Lord Grenville to Sir James Murray*

Whitehall, 20 January, 1793.

[He expresses regret at seeing His Prussian Majesty's Declaration respecting Polish affairs.] I have it in command from the King to instruct you to hold the same language upon the subject, respecting the impolicy as well as the injustice of the King of Prussia's views of further aggrandisement on the side of Poland. [He adds that H. M. would in no case become] a party to a plan for obtaining a compensation for the expenses of the war by acquisitions wrested from a neutral and unoffending Power. . . . It will be a matter of sincere regret if this incident should be productive of coldness and distance between H. M. and those Powers who have a common interest with H. M. in the establishment of the most perfect concert and good understanding. [He concludes by stating that H. M. is bound by no engagement to Poland, but may find himself under the necessity of publishing his views on this subject.]

J. HOLLAND ROSE.

### *France and the Balearic Islands in 1840*

How near, in 1840, was England to a war with France, a war that would not improbably have been disastrous to both countries, is not unknown. When the European powers combined to urge the withdrawal of Mehemet Ali from Syria, France after a while held back, and the convention of 15 July 1840 was signed only

by Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia on the one part, and by the Porte on the other. Armed action was then taken and Acre was captured. Popular feeling in France was greatly excited, and it was believed that England desired to expel the pasha from Egypt as well.

At so critical a time, and with so energetic a foreign secretary as Lord Palmerston, nothing was more likely to be a *casus belli* than, had it not been baffled, the project of M. Thiers to seize by surprise the Balearic Islands, when the troubled condition of Spain offered him both a pretext and an urgent reason for so unjustifiable a proceeding. But, although this imminent danger to the peace of Europe cannot have failed to be more than suspected from what came out in a statement, rather hazarded, as will be seen, of Count Jaubert<sup>1</sup> in the French chamber, how it was tided over remained a secret until the publication, in 1870, of *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, by the late Sir Henry L. Bulwer.<sup>2</sup> And, as this is called by the eminent diplomatist, who was the author of the work referred to, one of 'the Curiosities of Diplomacy', I venture to offer a contribution thereto from the following correspondence between my father, the late Mr. Newton S. Scott,<sup>3</sup> and the late Lord Emly.<sup>4</sup>

*Mr. Scott to Lord Emly*

Biarritz, 21 Feb., 1886.

Dear Lord Emly,

You have been so kind as to listen to a narrative of certain political events which occurred in Spain in the year 1840, and in which, from the circumstances of my official position at the time at Madrid, I was called upon to take an active part. Our mutual friend, Mr. O'Brien, moreover assures me that you will be pleased to have an account of them in writing, and therefore with pleasure I avail myself of your permission to do so.

I will endeavour to spare your valuable time as much as possible, but I must in the first place quote from an interesting and much read work, *The Life of Viscount Palmerston*, by the late Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer (Lord Dalling), Vol. II, page 301, of the Tauchnitz edition:—

I quote an extract from a letter to Lord Granville of the 20th October, because it refers to a singular intention which betokened that restless desire to do something, when it cannot do the thing it wants, which has often characterized the French Government. Lord Palmerston writes to Lord Granville: 'Can you find out by any means at your disposal what is the *coup d'éclat* for which the French squadron has been brought back to Toulon? I conclude it is to be ready to meet and drive back

<sup>1</sup> Hippolyte-François, Comte Jaubert, minister of public works in the administration of March 1840.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Lord Dalling and Bulwer, and sometime ambassador at Constantinople.

<sup>3</sup> Paid attaché at Madrid, 1840-5, secretary of legation to Switzerland, 1845-6.

<sup>4</sup> William Monsell, Baron Emly, P.C., postmaster-general, 1853, lord-lieutenant of Limerick, 1871.

<sup>5</sup> Then British ambassador at Paris, with Bulwer for secretary of embassy.

the Russian squadron from the Baltic; but that squadron will not come out at present, though we now hear that it will winter at Revel, where it will be free to come out almost the whole of the winter.' Lord Granville asked me to obtain the information which Lord Palmerston was seeking. I did so. The French fleet was not collecting at Toulon, as Lord Palmerston supposed, for the purpose of driving back the Russian fleet should it make its appearance in the Mediterranean; another purpose was assigned to it. Queen Christina, as it is known, had just retired or been driven from Spain (Oct. 12), and the Government of General Espartero, then the Regent and supposed to be acting under English influence, was installed in the place of that of the Queen Mother. The notion of the French Cabinet was to seize the Balearic Islands, partly as a protest against English action or supposed action in the affairs of the Spanish peninsula, and partly because, if a war in the Mediterranean should eventually take place, it would be of great importance to France to have those islands, with reference to their connexion with Algeria, in their power. The seizure of islands belonging to Spain, because Mehemet Ali was driven out of Syria, seemed a proceeding so little in relation with its cause, that, although I was positively assured that such were the instructions given to Admiral Lalande, I could not feel confident that I was not misled; but at all events my information, such as it was, communicated to Lord Granville, and through him to Her Majesty's Government, reached Mr. Scott, then at Madrid (Mr. Aston\* being absent), who warned the Spanish Government of the design contemplated.† M. Thiers, however, went out of office shortly after this. Nothing was done with respect to the Balearic Isles, and of course great doubt was entertained as to whether the plan revealed to me had really existed. All doubt, however, was soon dispelled, for M. Joubert, who had been in M. Thiers' Cabinet, being provoked by a question put in the course of discussion as to what the Government he had belonged to—the menacing language and attitude of which was not denied—had ever seriously contemplated, rose up from his seat, and said that if the Government to which allusion had been made had remained but a short time longer in office, the French flag would have floated on the Balearic Islands!‡

¶ If "The Curiosities of Diplomacy" are ever published, this anecdote may take a place amongst them.

Your Lordship will remark that the concluding sentence about the curiosities of Diplomacy seems a challenge or at all events an invitation to me to narrate an anecdote illustrative of them. One thing is certain: if Bulwer, at that time Secretary of Embassy at Paris, had not, many years later, published an account of the historical event with which I am concerned, it would remain still unknown. I cannot however help regretting that he did not enter into the interesting details, which must have been known to him, which immediately touch me, and that he has confined himself to what concerned himself, and testified to the ability with which he succeeded in finding out an important secret of the French Government.

A short time previous to the 'Pronunciamiento' of September, 1840, the Queen-Regent Christina, accompanied by her daughter, Queen Isabella, started for Barcelona, contrary to the advice of the English Minister, but, as it was supposed, in accordance with that of the French Ambassador, M. de Rumigny, in the remote hope of gaining over General Espartero (who had just victoriously brought the Carlist war to an end) to espouse the obnoxious policy of the Government in the matter of the law relative

\* British minister plenipotentiary to Spain, afterwards Sir Arthur Aston, G.C.B.

† In a footnote, Bulwer adds here:—'Mr. Scott was speaking to me not long since of his having received the information.'

‡ 'Après la chute du cabinet du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1840, M. Jaubert vint s'asseoir sur les bancs de l'opposition, et, à quelque temps de là, on eut à lui reprocher une indiscretion qui fit du bruit dans le monde parlementaire, relativement aux Iles Baléares.'—*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, tom. xxvi. 1858 (Firmin Didot).

to Municipalities ('Ley de Ayuntamientos'), which provoked a general insurrection in the country. Having failed in her purpose, Christina fled to Valencia, and, after a few days' residence, was forced to abdicate the Regency, and embarked for France. Mr. Aston, the English Minister, as well as the other chiefs of missions accredited to Her Majesty, accompanied her to Barcelona and to Valencia, and I, the senior Attaché, was left in charge of the Mission at Madrid, in which capacity I corresponded officially with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for foreign affairs.

At this juncture I received from the late Earl Granville, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, a dispatch, which, very unusually and to my great dismay, was in cipher; for, in the hurry of his departure, Mr. Aston had forgotten to deliver the cipher to me.—My first act was a bold one, and, if I had not been on terms of intimate friendship with my chief, I should probably not have ventured to do it. With a crowbar I had to break open several of his private dispatch boxes, and was at length successful in getting at what I wanted, and in deciphering the following dispatch:—

Intelligence of Queen Christina's expulsion from Spain and her arrival at Port Vendres has reached this Government, and I learn from undoubted authority that Admiral Lalande, in command of the French fleet in the Mediterranean, has been instructed to proceed to the Balearic Islands, and, if possible, to take possession of Port-Mahon.

It struck me at once that it was of the greatest importance that some attempt should be made to prevent this, and I cannot say how deeply I regretted, at such a critical moment, the total absence of any suggestion from Lord Granville as to the steps to be taken in such an emergency. I had no instructions, and it was therefore not without much hesitation, from a natural fear of committing the error of showing 'trop de zèle', that I made up my mind to take upon myself the responsibility of acting as follows.

First of all I ascertained from an employé of the Spanish Ministry of War that the garrison of Port-Mahon consisted only of a few soldiers under the command of a subaltern; and it would therefore be easy for Admiral Lalande to carry out his instructions; but, if a sufficient number of troops to repel an attack could be dispatched in time, the French Admiral would hesitate to occupy the place by force: such an attempt would have been tantamount to a declaration of war, and one which England would not have tolerated. I therefore determined to lose no time in addressing a letter to General Espartero, who, I learnt that day, was on his march at the head of the Army to Madrid, and who, at that time, could alone dispose of the Spanish troops. I confided my letter, written in Spanish, to Captain Lynn, R.E.,<sup>9</sup> Military Attaché to the Mission, on whose discretion and intelligence I could rely, and who carefully concealed it about his person. I supplied him with the best horse I had and with sufficient funds, and I accompanied him some miles, ostensibly on a sporting excursion.

All this seems very much like a chapter from one of A. Dumas' novels, but you must bear in mind that no railways or telegraphic wires existed in those days, and that it took thirteen days to get an answer from England.

<sup>9</sup> Then Lieutenant James Lynn, Captain, 1843, Lieut.-Colonel, 1854.

As I was not at that time personally acquainted with General Espartero, and it was not likely that he knew of my existence, I had in the first instance to explain what my official position at Madrid was, the truth of which my messenger would confirm; and, having stated the important intelligence received from Paris, I ventured further and suggested to him the advisability of sending back to Valencia or any other nearest port to Mahon a portion of the troops under his command, in order that they might be embarked for that fortress, in the hope of their arriving in time to resist a coup de main (or 'coup d'éclat', as Lord Palmerston writes) on the part of the French.

The result of my letter was, I may say, marvellously successful. Captain Lynn fell in with Espartero at Albacete, on the line of his march from Valencia to Madrid, in the middle of the night. The General rose from his bed to receive him, and without hesitation gave orders to carry out the measure which I had ventured to suggest.

I may here remark that, but for the great activity displayed by all the parties concerned, the result would not have proved so satisfactory. The time occupied by me from the moment I received Lord Granville's ciphered communication to Captain Lynn's departure did not exceed four hours; and the whole thing was done with the utmost secrecy and discretion.

The considerable reinforcement of Spanish troops did arrive in time (some forty-eight hours before the Toulon fleet), and Admiral Lalande did not think proper, in consequence probably of the unexpected strength of the garrison, to land troops, and make an attempt, under the plea of watering, to seize the place, from which he sailed back to Toulon.

The correctness of Lord Granville's information was proved, as your Lordship will see by referring to the above-quoted extract from *The Life of Viscount Palmerston*.

If this French plan had succeeded, another civil war would probably have been the consequence, to say nothing of the complication of affairs in Europe, especially with regard to English interests, at a time when the irritation caused by Lord Palmerston's policy in signing the treaty of July 1840, on the Syrian question, was nigh producing a rupture with France.

The rules of the Diplomatic service precluded me from accepting at the time from the Spanish Government the offer it made me of a distinctive mark of its gratitude for the service it was my good fortune to render to Spain,<sup>10</sup> but Captain Lynn was promoted to the rank of commander of the order of Charles III.

I was honoured and gratified however by the approbation of my chief, as well as by that of Lord Palmerston, whose flattering dispatch must be in the archives of the Foreign Office.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>10</sup> Some years, however, after his retirement, owing to serious ill-health at the time, from the diplomatic service, my father was agreeably surprised (Narvaez, who had upset Espartero in 1843, being then in power) by being made Commander *de numero extraordinario* of the order of Charles III, by royal decree of 6 January 1857. But I believe that he neglected to ask for authorization to wear the star and badge, presented to him, in his own country.

Before I conclude this long letter, I would point out three inaccuracies in Bulwer's narrative. In the first place, Espartero had not yet been elected Regent : this took place several days later<sup>11</sup> and after his arrival at Madrid. Secondly, the communication in cipher was not made to me by the Foreign Office, but by Earl Granville, H.M. Ambassador at Paris. Thirdly, it was Count Jaubert, and not Monsieur Joubert, the ex-minister who defended M. Thiers' policy in the French Chamber.<sup>12</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

*Lord Emly to Mr. Scott*

London, March 14, 1886.

My dear Mr. Scott,

I am very much obliged to you for your letter. It was kind indeed of you to take the trouble of writing it. It puts me in possession of an authentic record of one of the most romantic and important incidents I ever heard of. I hope that we may always have diplomatists as courageous and clear-sighted as you proved yourself.

I am

very sincerely yours

EMLY.

In a subsequent letter to Lord Emly, my father remarks on his obligation of silence until the veil of secrecy had been lifted by Sir Henry Bulwer's *Life of Lord Palmerston*.

CHARLES N. SCOTT.

<sup>11</sup> Rather some months after. I have also found that Mr. Aston did not leave Madrid, at any rate in September, to be near the Queen-Regent at Barcelona, but must have gone straight to Valencia, whatever may have been the case with other chiefs of missions. These little slips of memory of things *not directly concerning himself* were to be expected in a man of my father's advanced age, nearly half a century after the occurrences.

<sup>12</sup> These slight inaccuracies are reproduced in *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, by the Hon. Evelyn Ashley.