CHAPTER LIX

STROLLING IN EXILE

MELBOURNE now "seemed to hold office for no other purpose than that of dining at Buckingham Palace." In other words, "his great object seemed to be to keep a rickety concern together, less from political ambition than from his personal feelings for the Queen." He was (February 27, 1841) "only Prime Minister in name and has no authority. He is all in all at Buckingham Palace but very little in Downing Street."

January 9, 1841: The other day at Windsor, when Clarendon was sitting talking with Melbourne, the latter in his lounging way, as if thinking aloud, said, "In all my experience, I never remember such a state of things as the present; I never remember, in the course of my political life, anything at all like it; it can't last—it's impossible this government can go on; Palmerston in communication with the Tories—Palmerston and Ashley —" and then he stopped. Clarendon said, "What! you think Palmerston and the Tories will come together?" To which Melbourne nodded assent. "And which," Clarendon persevered, "will come to the other: will Palmerston go to Ashley, or will Ashley come to Palmerston?" To which Melbourne chuckled and grunted, laughed and rubbed his hands, and only said, "Oh, I don't know." These are the sentiments of the Prime Minister about his own government—a strange state of things.

August 15, 1839: Those who watch the course of events, and who occasionally peep behind the curtain, have but a sorry spectacle to contemplate: a government miserably weak, dragging on a sickly existence, now endeavouring to curry a little favour with one party, now with another, so unused to stand, and so incapable of standing, on any great principles, that at last they have, or appear to have, none to stand on; buffeted by their antagonists, and often by their supporters in Parliament; despised by the country at large; clinging to office merely to gratify the whim and the fancy of a young Queen, who has

herself become an object of indifference or of odium, while they are just sufficiently supported in the House of Commons to keep their places, and not to carry their measures.

"These are statesmen," cries Greville, "and this is government, and here we have a beginning of the evils that the caprice and folly of the Queen, backed as they were by the wickedness of the Whigs, were certain to entail."

August 24, 1840: . . . Our Cabinet is a complete republic, and Melbourne, their ostensible head, has no overruling authority, and is too indolent and too averse to energetic measures to think of having any, or to desire it. Any man of resolution and obstinacy does what he will with Melbourne.

November 29, 1848: . . . He abhorred disputes and quarrels of every description, and he was constantly temporizing and patching them up when they occurred in his Cabinet (as they often did) by all sorts of expedients, seldom asserting either the dignity or the authority of his position as head of the Government. Such weak and unworthy misrule brought his Cabinet, his party, and himself into contempt, and it was unquestionably in great measure owing to his want of judgment and firmness that they became so unpopular, and at last fell with so little credit and dignity as they did in 1841.

Melbourne used to say (June 3, 1833), "now that we are much hated as they [the Tories] were, we shall stay in forever." But the Government began at last to sustain defeats:

May 2, 1841: . . . After the first division, Clarendon wrote to me as follows: "The defeat last night was a signal one. We have had a Cabinet about it, and I went there fully expecting that resignation would be the order of the day—*the word never crossed the lips of anyone!*"

In 1839, the Whigs began to depend on the Irish:

September 23, 1839: Lady Holland asked me the other night what I thought of their prospects, and I told her I thought them very bad. She said, "The fact is, we have nothing to rely upon but the Queen and Paddy." This has since struck me as being an epigrammatic but very correct description of their position.

The extent to which the Whigs bargained for the Irish Vote had always been a matter of controversy:

March 12, 1836: The celebrated meeting at Lichfield House, which was afterward described as the Lichfield House Compact, was held on this day, the 12th March. It was supposed to have cemented the union between the leader of the Whig party and O'Connell. But in fact there was no compact at all, and the whole proceedings at the meeting consisted in attempts, made for a long time in vain, to induce Mr. Hume to abandon his motion for limiting the supplies.

In the meantime [February 28, 1838] "the Tory geese may cackle" and "men like Jemmy Bradshaw and Sir John Tyrrell (with the gout) may wear their hats and crutches in triumph."

September 5, 1839: Among other bad signs of these times, one is the decay of *loyalty* in the Tory party; the Tory principle is completely destroyed by party rage. No Opposition was ever more rabid than this is, no people ever treated or spoke of the Sovereign with such marked disrespect. They seem not to care one straw for the Crown, its dignity, or its authority, because the head on which it is placed does not nod with benignity to them. An example of this took place the other day, when at a dinner at Shrewsbury the company refused to drink the health of the new Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Sutherland (a man not personally obnoxious), because the Duchess of Sutherland is at the head of the Queen's female household. This reproach does not apply to the leaders of the party, who are too wise and too decorous to hold such language or to approve such conduct; but this is the *animus* which distinguishes the tail and the body, and they take no pains to conceal it.

London, November 8, 1839: . . . Next to this episode, Jemmy Bradshaw's speech at Canterbury has attracted the greatest attention, and he has been for many days the hero of newspaper discussion. This speech, which was a tissue of folly and impertinence, but principally remarkable for a personal attack of the most violent and indecent kind upon the Queen, was received with shouts of applause at a Conservative dinner, and reported with many compliments, and some gentle reprehension, by the Tory press. His example has since been followed in a less offensive style by two others calling themselves Tories—a Mr. Roby and a Mr. Escott. Of these rabid and disloyal ef-

fusions, the Government papers have not failed to make the most, by pointing out the disaffected and almost treasonable character of modern Toryism when embittered by exclusion from office; and there is no doubt that, contemptible as the authors are, their senseless and disgusting exhibitions are calculated to do great mischief; for, if no other evil ensued, it is one of no small consequence to sour the mind of the Queen still more against the whole Tory party, and fasten upon her an impression which it will be difficult to efface, that she is odious and her authority contemptible in their eyes, so long as she is unfavourable to them, and commits herself to other hands than theirs. Peel is to be pitied for having to lead such an unruly and unprincipled faction.

Horsman, the Whig member for Cockermouth, declared that (January 17, 1840) "Bradshaw had the tongue of a traitor and the heart of a coward." In a duel, therefore, "they exchanged shots":

January 18, 1840: . . . Bradshaw behaved very well. After the shots, Gurwood [his second] asked if Horsman would retract. Anson [Horsman's second] said, "No, not till Bradshaw did or apologized." Gurwood then said to Anson, "Will you propose to him to do so? I cannot." So he did. Bradshaw was deeply affected; owned he had been miserable ever since; said he could not live without honour, but would say anything that Anson and Gurwood (and he felt his honour as safe with the former as the latter) would agree that he could and ought to say; and George Anson drew up his apology, and did not make it stronger, because he would not press him hard. The fact is, he is much indebted to Horsman for getting him out, in some measure, of a very bad scrape.

Gurwood was the editor of the Duke's despatches, for which service he had just been appointed Governor of the Tower. According to Greville, he was thus "a silly fellow . . . to meddle" in the affair.

That the Queen on her part was embittered against the Tories, could not be denied:

January 22, 1840: . . . Yesterday morning the Duke of Bedford came to me, to beg I would suggest some Lord for the

situation of Chief of Prince Albert's establishment, for they can get none who is eligible. They want a Peer, a Whig, and a man of good sense, character and education, something rather better than common, and such an one willing to put on Court trappings they find not easily to be had. We made out a list, to be shown to Melbourne, who had consulted the Duke of Bedford, and asked him for a man. We talked over the bitter hostility between the Queen and the Tories, and he said that Melbourne did everything he could to mitigate her feelings, and to make her understand that she must not involve the whole party in the reproach which justly attaches to a few foolish or mischievous zealots, so much so that lately, when the Queen was inveighing against the Tories to somebody (he would not say to whom), and complaining of their behaviour to her, she added, "It is very odd, but I cannot get Lord Melbourne to see it in that light."

June 18, 1841: . . . The Queen went to Nuneham last week for Prince Albert's visit to Oxford, when he was made a Doctor. Her name was very well received, and so was the Prince himself in the theatre; but her Ministers, individually and collectively, were hissed and hooted with all the vehemence of Oxonian Toryism. Her Majesty said she thought it very disrespectful to the Prince to hiss her Ministers in his presence; but she must learn to bear with such manifestations of sentiment and not fancy that these Academici will refrain from expressing their political opinions in any presence, even in her own. They will think it quite sufficient to be civil and respectful to her name and her Consort's person, and will treat her obnoxious Ministers just as they think fit.

Downham, October 24, 1840: . . . If the Queen was not a spoiled child, only intent upon the gratification of her social predilections, if she was sensible of the great duty she owes to the country, and of the peril in which it is placed, instead of thinking by what contrivings and patchings up she can keep in the men, or rather *the man* (for she is probably indifferent to all the rest) she likes, and keep out those she detests, instead of being thus influenced by personal feelings, she would see the necessity of meeting the dangers and difficulties of our position by firmness, capacity, and union. But this is too much to expect from her. She is blinded by her partialities, and she does not perceive

the magnitude of the evils which must flow from the mistrust, disunion, and weakness, which prevail in her government and above all from the deplorable but mischievous imbecility of her Prime Minister.

Confident in the reformed electorate, "the Whig masses" (May 7, 1841) began to be "clamorous for a dissolution," to which "desperate plunge," however, Melbourne was "exceedingly averse." The Queen, too, was "very unhappy."

May 7, 1841: From what Lady Palmerston told me last night, her Majesty is prepared in the last necessity to resign herself to her fate, but it will be with a sort of sulky acquiescence, which will render the change very disagreeable to all the parties concerned, and which indicates the imperfect conception she has of the duties her station imposes on her. All this she must learn, and the sooner she begins the lesson the better.

May 9, 1841: . . . Meanwhile the Queen is behaving very well. She is very unhappy at the situation of affairs, and at the change with which she is menaced, but she is acting with dignity and propriety. She says she will express no wish and no opinion; whatever she is advised to do she will do, but she remains perfectly passive, and makes no attempts to urge Melbourne to take any course which his own judgment does not approve. This the Duke of Bedford told me yesterday, and it is to her credit.

May 11, 1841: . . . Melbourne is in a state of great agitation and disquietude, labouring under a sense of the enormous responsibility which rests upon him, embarrassed on one side by the importunities of his friends, and, on the other, alarmed at the danger of taking so desperate a step; and he says very truly and sensibly that in his opinion the Queen should never make an appeal to the people which was not likely to be successful.

However, "Melbourne's weak vacillating mind" (May 19, 1841) is "overpersuaded and he consents to what he so highly disapproves."

What brought matters to a head was the defeat of the Government on the sugar duties by thirty-six votes and on a direct motion of confidence by one vote:

June 6, 1841: . . . They left no stone unturned to procure a majority, and brought down a lord (Douglas Haliburton) who

is in a state of drivelling idiotcy, and quite incapable of comprehending what he was about. This poor wretch was brought in a chair; they got him into the House, and then wheeled him past the tellers. Charles Howard, Melbourne's private secretary, told me he thought it was a monstrous and indecent proceeding.

For the Whigs (July 11th) the election was "irretrievably lost."

July 11, 1841: . . . They have done their utmost to make the Queen the ostensible head of their party, to identify her with them and their measures, and they have caused the Crown to be placed in that humiliating condition which Melbourne so justly deprecated when the question was first mooted.

On a test division (August 28th), the Government was defeated in the new House of Commons by ninety-one votes.

In the House of Lords (August 25th) "Melbourne was miserable; he never made so bad a speech, mere buffoonery." But the Duke [Wellington] "complimented [him] handsomely on the judicious advice and good instruction he had given the Queen."

August 4, 1841: . . . The next thing from which the Whigs hope to derive benefit is the hostile disposition of the Queen toward the Tory Government, and this they do their utmost to foster and keep up as far as writings and speeches go; but I do not believe that Melbourne does any such thing, and he alone has access to the Queen's ear and to her secret thoughts. With him alone she communicates without reserve, and to none of his colleagues, not even to John Russell, does he impart *all* that passes between them. The best thing she can possibly do is to continue in her confidential habits with him as far as possible, for I am persuaded he will give her sound and honest advice; he will mitigate instead of exasperating her angry feelings, and instruct her in the duties and obligations of her position, and try at least to persuade her that her dignity, her happiness, and her interest are all concerned in her properly discharging them. He has faults enough of various kinds, but he is a man of honour and of sense, and he is deeply attached to the Queen. He will prefer her honour and repose to any interests of party, and it is my firm conviction that he will labour

to inspire her with just notions and sound principles, and as far as in him lies will smooth the difficulties which would be apt to clog her intercourse with his successors . . . every one of whom she cordially detests. She has been evidently spoilt; the adulation to which she has been accustomed since she came to the throne, and her own lofty ideas (however imbibed) of her own pretensions, have made her look upon the contradiction to her will and pleasure in the necessity of accepting men she dislikes, and parting with those she likes, as an injury and insult. She dislikes the whole Tory Cabinet *en masse*, because they are to be the Cabinet; she hates Peel from old recollections, and she never can forgive him, because she is conscious that she behaved ill to him; she hates Stanley as a renegade from the party she prefers, and her childish and capricious fancy is exhibited in her hatred of Graham, to whom she has taken an aversion *because he is so like Conroy*.

August 24, 1841: On Saturday at Windsor for a Council, for the Speech: the last Council, I presume, which these Ministers will hold. Nothing particular occurred. I believe that the Queen is extremely annoyed at what is about to take place, and would do anything to avert it; but as that is impossible, she has made up her mind to it. She seemed to me to be in her usual state of spirits. The truth is, when it comes to the point, that it is very disagreeable to have a complete change of decoration, to part with all the faces she has been accustomed to, and see herself surrounded with new ones, as she never takes any notice of them, and never addresses her household but to give her orders. That, however, is a very immaterial matter in comparison with the loss of Melbourne's society, and of those confidential habits which have become such an essential part of her existence.

September 4, 1841: Went yesterday to Claremont for the Council, at which the new Ministers were appointed—a day of severe trial for the Queen, who conducted herself in a manner which excited my greatest admiration and was really touching to see. All the members of the Old Government who had Seals or Wands to surrender were there (not Melbourne), and in one room; the new Cabinet and Privy Councillors were assembled in another, all in full dress. The Household were in the Hall. The Queen saw the people one after another, having already given audience to Peel. After this was over she sent for me to

inform her in what way the Seals were to be transferred to the new men. I found her with the Prince, and the table covered with bags and boxes. She desired I would tell her what was to be done, and if she must receive them in the Closet, or give them their Seals in the Council. I told her the latter was the usual form, and it was of course that which she preferred. Having explained the whole course of the proceeding to her, she begged I would take the Seals away, which I accordingly did, and had them put upon the Council table. She looked very much flushed, and her heart was evidently brim full, but she was composed, and throughout the whole of the proceedings, when her emotion might very well have overpowered her, she preserved complete self-possession, composure, and dignity. This struck me as a great effort of self-control, and remarkable in so young a woman. Taking leave is always a melancholy ceremony, and to take leave of those who have been about her for four years, whom she likes, and whom she thinks are attached to her, together with all the reminiscences and reflections which the occasion was calculated to excite, might well have elicited uncontrollable emotions. But though her feelings were quite evident, she succeeded in mastering them, and she sat at the Council Board with a complete presence of mind, and when she declared the President and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland her voice did not falter. Though no courtier and not disposed to be particularly indulgent to her, I did feel a strong mixture of pity and admiration at such a display of firmness. The Household almost all came to resign, but as Peel had not got their successors ready, she would not accept their resignations, and she was right. They came to me to know what was to be done. I went to Peel, who wrote down the only people he had to name—Master of the Horse, Steward, and Vice Chamberlain. I gave the paper to the Queen, and it was settled that Erroll and Belfast should alone resign. Lord Jersey kissed hands as Master of the Horse, and the rest continued to discharge their functions as before. Peel told me that she had behaved perfectly to him, and that he had said to her that he considered it his first and greatest duty to consult her happiness and comfort; that no person should be proposed to her who could be disagreeable to her, and that whatever claims or pretensions might be put forward on the score of parliamentary or political in-

fluence, nothing should induce him to listen to them, and he would take upon himself the whole responsibility of putting an extinguisher on such claims in any case in which they were inconsistent with her comfort or opposed to her inclination. I asked him if she had taken this well, and met it in a corresponding spirit, and he said, "Perfectly." In short, he was more than satisfied; he was charmed with her. She sent to know if any of the new Ministers wished to see her, but the only one who did so was the Duke of Wellington, who had an audience of a few minutes. He told me afterward that she reproached him for not taking office, and had been very kind to him. He told her that she might rely on it he had but one object, and that was to serve her in every way that he possibly could; but he thought he could be more useful to her without an office than with one; that there were younger men coming on whom it was better to put in place; and, in or out, she would find him always devoted to her person in any way in which he could render himself useful to her. So that everything went off very well, plenty of civilities, and nothing unpleasant; but, for all these honeyed words, affable resignation on her part, and humble expressions of duty and devotion on theirs, her heart is very sore, and her thoughts will long linger on the recollections of the past.

"Strangely enough," Greville was "established as the medium of communication between the present and the past Prime Ministers" and had "got the office of smoothing away the asperities of royal and official intercourse."

September 4, 1841: . . . I told him [Melbourne] how well she had behaved in the morning, and all Peel had said to me, and that he might rely on it Peel wished and intended to consult her comfort in every way, and that he had spoken to me with great feeling of the painful situation in which he was placed, and how impossible it was for any man with the commonest feelings of a gentleman not to be annoyed to the greatest degree at being the instrument, however unavoidably, of giving her so much pain. I told him that I knew Peel, so far from taking umbrage at the continuance of his social relations with her, was desirous that they should not be broken off. Melbourne said, "That was a very difficult matter, not on Peel's account,

for he had never imagined he would feel otherwise, but from other considerations."

As for Peel:

September 4, 1841: . . . He said that "it was ridiculous to suppose he could have any jealousy of the kind, that he had full reliance on the Queen's fairness toward him, and besides he knew very well how useless it would be to interfere, if there were any disposition to act unfairly toward him, as he was sure there would not be. Nothing he could do could prove effectual to prevent any mischief, and therefore implicit confidence was the wisest course. . . ."

He then talked of his communications with the Queen. He said that he had told her that if any other Ministerial arrangement had been possible, if any other individual could have been substituted for him, as far as his personal inclinations were concerned, he should have been most ready to give way to such person; but it was impossible for him not to be aware that no man but himself could form the Government, and that he had taken on himself responsibilities, and owed obligations to his party, which compelled him to accept the task. The Queen had agreed upon this necessity, and upon the impossibility of anybody else being substituted for him. He said a great deal to me of his own indifference to office, of the enormous sacrifices which it entailed upon him; and as to power, that he possessed enough of power out of office to satisfy him, if power was his object. He had told the Queen that his present position enabled him to make concessions to her which it was impossible for him to do in '39, when he was so weak and in a minority in the House of Commons; that now he could consult her wishes in a manner that was then out of his power, and with regard to her Household she should have no one forced upon her contrary to her own inclination. As to her ladies, he hoped, under the circumstances, she would take Conservatives, but he had no desire to suggest any particular individuals. Those who were most agreeable to her would be most acceptable to him, and he begged her to make her own selection. As to the men, she had said she did not care who they were, provided they were of good character; but every appointment had been made in concert with her, and it so happened that they were all exactly such as he had wished to

make, as well as such as she liked to have. He then repeated that he would not suffer her to be annoyed with the pretensions of any people who would be disagreeable to her. He knew that there were many expectations, and would be many disappointments, but he could not help that, and if Conservatives were not ready to make some personal sacrifices—if for the advantage of having their party placed in power they would not postpone their claims—he could not help it, and must take the consequences whatever they might be.

September 17, 1841: . . . Peel told me that nobody could form an idea of what he had had to go through in the disposal of places, the adjustment of conflicting claims, and in answering particular applications, everybody thinking their own case the strongest in the world, and that they alone ought to be excepted from any general rule. I take it the examples of selfishness and self-sufficiency have been beyond all conception. A few I heard of: old Maryborough at seventy-nine years old is not content with passing the few years he may have to live in repose, and is indignant that nothing was offered to him.

The Queen's Whig ladies were again in a delicate situation:

May 11, 1841: . . . To do them justice, they seem only anxious to put matters in train for averting any repetition of the embarrassment which proved fatal to Peel two years ago, and which might again be productive of a good deal of difficulty and some unpleasant feeling. They want to make things go on smoothly, and to reconcile the dignity of the Queen with the consistency of Peel. Their own feelings, and those of the ladies themselves, would suggest resignation, but then they shrink from the idea of deserting the Queen.

Enough that the three Whig ladies—Sutherland, Bedford, and Normanby—disappeared.

Things were beginning to be dull. On a visit to Chiswick, "it rained half the time and it was very formal":

June 20, 1841: The Queen cannot, and will not, encourage conversation; nothing of the kind is ever attempted and as Melbourne was not there [at Chiswick] she had nobody to talk to.

June 12, 1841: . . . Dined at the Castle on Thursday; one

hundred people in St. George's Hall; very magnificent, blazing with gold plate and light, and very tiresome. In the evening Mdlle. Rachel came to recite, which she did *à trois reprises* on a sort of stage made in the embrasure of the window, from *Bajazet*, *Marie Stuart*, and *Andromaque*. It is so much less effective than her acting (besides my unfortunate inability to follow and comprehend French declamation) that it was fatiguing, but it served to occupy the evening, which is always the great difficulty in Royal society. The Queen was pretty well received on the course, and her party consisted in great measure of Tory guests.

It was idle to deny that the Queen felt keenly the loss of Melbourne:

September 1, 1841: On Monday morning Peel went down to Windsor. He was well enough satisfied with his reception. The Queen was civil, but dejected; she repeated (what she said two years ago) the expression of her regret at parting with her Ministers. Peel, with very good taste, told her that, as he had never presumed to anticipate his being sent for, he had had no communications with anybody, and was quite unprepared with any list to submit to her, and must therefore crave for time. It was settled that he should have another audience this morning.

September 6, 1841: . . . She said Peel was so shy that it made her shy, and this renders their intercourse difficult and embarrassing, but Melbourne thinks this may wear off in time. I said it might be eased by his cultivating the Prince, with whom he could discuss art, literature, and the tastes they had in common.

We must realize that it was only because of Melbourne that she had been partial to the Whigs. She had "no notion of a Whig Government" except with him as Prime Minister (September, 1841) and she "cares for nobody else." She "loved to have Melbourne domesticated at Windsor Castle," and if she favoured his party, it was only because "she could not have him there on any other terms."

She began thus to be fond of the Tories:

August 12, 1841: . . . He [the Duke of Bedford] told me that Melbourne had worked hard to reconcile the Queen's mind to

the impending change, and to tranquillize her and induce her to do properly what she will have to do; and the Prince has done the same, and that their efforts have been successful.

September 17, 1841: A Council at Windsor on Wednesday, the first since the change. It went off very well, all the new Ministers being satisfied with their reception. The Queen was very gracious and good-humoured.

December 9, 1841: . . . I asked Graham how they were going on with the Queen. He said, "Very well. They sought for no favour and were better without it. She was very civil, very gracious, and even, on two or three little occasions, she had granted favours in a way that was indicative of good will." He said that they treated her with profound respect and the greatest attention. He made it a rule to address her as he would a sensible *man*, laying all matters before her, with the reasons for the advice he tendered, and he thought this was the most legitimate as well as judicious flattery that could be offered to her, and such as must gratify her, and the more because there was no appearance of flattery in it, and nothing but what was fit and proper.

September 1, 1842: . . . The Queen, too, is to all appearance on just as good terms with the present Government as she was with the last. There is no such intimacy with anybody as there was with Melbourne, but she is very civil to all her Ministers, invites them constantly to her house, and, what is curious, hardly ever takes any notice of those members of the late Government and Household whom she appeared not to be able to live without; even Melbourne is very rarely a guest either at Windsor or at Buckingham House.

September 24, 1842: . . . We had a Council at Windsor yesterday, where I met Peel for the first time since his return from Scotland. We now go to the Council and return to town after it, instead of being invited to remain there, which is a very great improvement. This custom has gradually superseded the other without the appearance of anything offensive or uncivil, and is no doubt much more agreeable to the Queen, who has no mind to have more of the society of her present Ministers than she can help.

August 6, 1843: . . . The Court is entirely on their [the Tory] side. The Queen never cared for any individual of her old

government but Melbourne, and she knows that his political life is closed; she feels that her own personal comfort is much greater with Peel's Government and large majority, than it ever was, or is likely to be again with the Whigs. She remembers what a state of continual agitation she was kept in, when they never knew from day to day whether they should not be beaten and turned out, and she infinitely prefers her present state of security and repose, especially as the present Ministers do all they can to please her, and her husband is their strenuous and avowed friend.

Melbourne, on his side, felt the change. He "never can speak of the Queen (August 21, 1845) without tears coming into his eyes; he is, however, in a very nervous lachrymose state."

November 29, 1848: . . . At the time Melbourne left office he was only an occasional guest at Court, but the Queen continued to correspond with him constantly, and gave him frequent proofs that her regard for him was undiminished. He took very little part in politics after 1841, and it was not long before his health began to give way. He had been so completely absorbed by the Court that for many years he had been almost lost to society; but as soon as he was out of office, he resumed his old habits, and was continually to be found at Holland House, at Lady Palmerston's, and with a few other intimate friends. There he loved to lounge and sprawl at his ease, pouring out a rough but original stream of talk, shrewd, playful, and instructive. His distinctive qualities were strong sound sense, and an innate taste for what was great and good, either in action or sentiment. His mind kindled, his eye brightened, and his tongue grew eloquent when noble examples or sublime conceptions presented themselves before him. He would not have passed "unmoved by any scene that was consecrated by virtue, by valour, or by wisdom." But while he pursued truth, as a philosopher, his love of paradox made him often appear a strange mass of contradiction and inconsistency.

October 29, 1842: Lord Melbourne has had an attack of palsy, very slight, and he is recovering, but it is of course alarming. He is not himself aware of the nature of the seizure, and asks if it was lumbago. This shows how slight it was.

December 13, 1843: . . . I dined with Lady Holland the other

day, and met Melbourne for the second time only since his illness. He looked tolerably well in the face, but was feeble and out of spirits. He had been at the Queen's party at Chatsworth, which excited him, and was bad for him. At first he attempted to talk in his old strain; but it was evidently an effort, he soon relapsed into silence, and was in a hurry to get away the moment dinner was over. I have no doubt he chafes and frets under the consciousness of his decay.

Broadlands, December 29, 1843: I came here to-day, having passed the previous week at Brighton with the Granvilles; found nobody but Melbourne and the Beauvales; the former in pretty good force, more grave, more silent than formerly, but with intervals of talkativeness in his usual tone and manner. Things drop from him now and then, curious or interesting.

January 26, 1848: Came back from Brocket on Monday. Melbourne not much inclined to talk; he dines at a quarter-past seven, and he went to bed, or at least to his room, at half-past eight.

Victoria herself knew that it was a vain mirage:

January 16, 1843: . . . The public had not returned to them [the Whigs], and the Queen, their great supporter, has certainly fallen away from them. She has found, after a year's experience, that she can go on very happily and comfortably with the objects of her former detestation. She never cared a farthing for any of the late Cabinet but Melbourne, and besides having apparently ceased to care very much about him, now that his recent attack has made his restoration to office impossible, she will have no motive whatever for desiring all the trouble and risk attending a change of Government, and I have no sort of doubt she would infinitely prefer that matters should remain as they are.

After leaving office, Melbourne's correspondence with the Queen certainly did continue. Granville was to tell Greville the view of it, communicated to him by Baron Stockmar:

London, October 30, 1854: . . . I had always imagined that Melbourne had played throughout a very honourable part toward the Queen and to the Government that succeeded his own, and in the sketch of his character that I drew up, I gave

him credit for so doing, and I was naturally confirmed in the view by the communication of which I was myself the bearer from him to Peel. I was therefore much surprised to hear that after his retirement he continued constantly to correspond with the Queen on political subjects, and that not only Stockmar but Prince Albert himself had not been able to persuade her to give up this dangerous and unconstitutional intercourse. At length, on one occasion, Melbourne wrote to her that she had now an opportunity of delivering herself from Sir Robert Peel, and that he was ready to inform her how she might accomplish it. Stockmar saw this letter, and told the Prince (and I think the Queen too) that this was too bad, and that the correspondence *must* be stopped, and he undertook to put an end to it. He accordingly wrote to Melbourne and told him he had seen this letter, remonstrated with him on its contents in the strongest terms, and proposed an interview with him. Melbourne wrote him back word (without appearing at all offended) that as soon as he went to town he would see him and send for him for the purpose. When Stockmar said he would put an end to it, the Prince asked him *how*, and he replied he would write to him and ask to see him, that the interview would never take place, but that Melbourne would leave off writing, and exactly as he had said, it took place. The Queen and Melbourne continued to correspond till the end of his life, but never again about politics. This anecdote explains why she was so excessively anxious to get back her letters to Melbourne, and all the stir she made about it when he died, and her annoyance at not getting them at all. It is also curious as showing how gradually the Prince's influence increased, and that at first he was by no means so powerful as he afterward became.

December 9, 1848: Melbourne's conduct in respect to the Queen's correspondence has been unpardonable and considering his fondness of her inconceivable. From the moment of her accession she corresponded with him, whenever they were apart, with the greatest unreserve. Accordingly, after his paralytic attack she got alarmed about her letters and wrote to him to say so, not however asking to have them returned. He ought then to have returned them, but he did not, and seems to have made hardly any reply. At all events if he did not send her

her letters, he ought to have taken measures to secure their immediate restoration to her upon his death, but he did nothing of the kind. He left them with the mass of his papers, and gave no directions about them either in his will or in the letter which he left for Beauvale.

November 29, 1848: . . . His influence and authority at Court were not diminished, nor his position there altered by her marriage; but the Prince, though always living on very friendly terms with him, was secretly rejoiced when the political power of this great favourite was brought to a close; for, so long as Melbourne was there, he undoubtedly played but an obscure and secondary part. . . .

It would be rendering imperfect justice to Melbourne's character to look upon him rather as a courtier than as a statesman, and to fancy that he made his political principles subordinate to his personal predilections. He was deeply attached to the Queen, but he had all the patriotism of an English gentleman, and was jealous of the honour and proud of the greatness of his country. He held office with a profound sense of its responsibilities; there never was a Minister more conscientious in the distribution of patronage, more especially of his ecclesiastical patronage. He was perfectly disinterested, without nepotism, and without vanity; he sought no emoluments for his connections, and steadily declined all honours for himself. The Queen often pressed him to accept the Garter, but he never would consent, and it was remarked that the Prime Minister of England was conspicuous at Court for being alone undecorated amidst the stars and ribands which glittered around him.